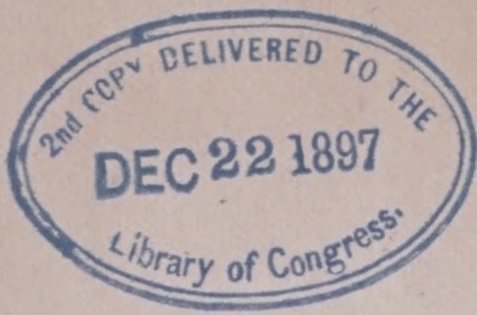




OVER  
THE  
HILLS

BY  
MARY  
FINDLATER



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PZ3 Copyright No. ....

Shelf F49320  
copy 2

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





OVER THE HILLS



# OVER THE HILLS

✓ BY

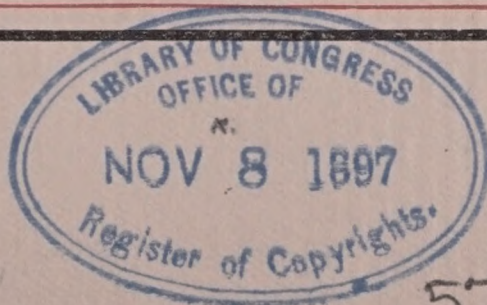
MARY FINDLATER



NEW YORK

DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY

1897



57128e32

TWO COPIES RECEIVED

PZ 3  
F49320  
copy 2

Copyright, 1897  
by  
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

BURR PRINTING HOUSE, NEW YORK.



# OVER THE HILLS

---

## CHAPTER I

THE firm of Jerningham, Van der Hulst & Gunn was the only house of any importance in Ubster : Mr. Jerningham was the only rich man in the town, his wife the only lady who 'kept her carriage,' but his niece was, even in Ubster, only one of many spinsters. When Miss Jane Anne Jerningham, therefore, married Campbell of Glarn there was matter for a nine days' wonder. In a country town the size of Ubster, the marriage of a plain woman who had passed her first youth was (I speak of the early fifties) little short of miraculous.

Nobody could tell how she had met him or where, and her relations declared that they had known nothing about it beforehand. To say that they had noticed nothing would perhaps have been nearer the truth, for Jane Anne's affairs had never provoked much interest at any time, she being

‘ hidden from the strife of tongues ’ by the best of all coverings, her own insignificance. She had lived in her uncle’s house ever since she was a child, and it was only the association, the aroma of his great wealth that her name carried with it, which distinguished her in any way. It seemed to the younger people of her acquaintance subversive to the established order of things that Jane Anne should marry : there was no knowing *what* might happen after that ! Miss Jerningham herself was as much surprised as any one. For the first time in her life she had a sensation of solemn self-importance when she communicated the news to her aunt.

‘ Nonsense, Jane Anne ! Impossible,’ was the lady’s first exclamation, followed by ‘ Campbell ! that fat man with the cough that we met at Aunt Sophie’s ! And where ’s Glarn ? ’

‘ It is a remote place, I believe,’ said Jane Anne, ‘ and he tells me that he has very little money.’

‘ I should think so,’ said Mrs. Jerningham. ‘ He is a minister or something, isn’t he ? ’ she added.

‘ Not exactly,’ said her niece, confused a little at being expected to define Mr. Campbell’s position. ‘ He owns Glarn, aunt, but he’s the minister too.’

‘ Why is he so poor, then ? Between them both he ought to have something,’ said Mrs. Jerning-

ham, whose only point of acuteness was financial.

‘It is a *very* small property, and a *very* small living, I believe,’ faltered her niece. ‘Aunt Sophie tells me he only gets eighty pounds a year, and that the church is no bigger than this room.’

‘Big enough if that’s all he gets for preaching in it! Oh, by-the-bye, he was an admirer of Aunt Sophie’s once, I remember. She refused him.’ Jane Anne winced a little. ‘Go and tell your uncle—I’ll have nothing to do with it,’ said Mrs. Jerningham. ‘He’s in the library now—you’d better get it over.’

Jane Anne thought the same. She did not wait till her courage was lowered by thinking over it, but turned away, and went slowly down the great shallow staircase into the hall.

The house, viewed from the outside, was an unpretentious old mansion, standing close to the harbour, with a row of flat windows along the front, and a wide flight of stone steps leading up to the door, from a paved square that opened off the quay. It had been built a century before by the senior Van der Hulst, a Dutchman, and indoors the rooms were large, furnished with a solid luxury that showed the timber trade of those days to have been prosperous. The library windows looked out upon the harbour, and above the green

blinds that screened the lower panes a tangle of masts and spars rose against the sky.

As Jane Anne paused for a moment on the threshold before she went into the room, her hand went up to her heart with a gesture suggestive of sickening fright. To tell her aunt had been comparatively an easy matter ; to tell her uncle was another thing altogether.

Mr. Jerningham was napping in his easy-chair, and did not at first hear her come in. The light fell full upon his portly figure slackened with sleep. A dark man, with a full-lipped face, and small thick hands. Rumours said that his mother had been of foreign extraction ; and when, as in the present instance, he wore a white waistcoat, the report struck one as being correct. Strangers who had not been much brought in contact with him, and had noticed only the genial easy manner of the man, would have been surprised to learn that he was an object of fear to any one. . . . So genial—had brought up his niece from the time she was a child—his great wealth of course made him respected—but to be afraid of him !

Yet Jane Anne stood for two minutes looking at her uncle in silence, before she ventured on the timid little cough that roused him from his nap.

‘ Uncle,’ she said, ‘ are you awake ? ’ Jerningham started, rubbed his hand over his face, crossed one leg over the other and yawned. ‘ Well, what

d'ye want?' he asked, the question engulfed in another yawn. Then noticing her flustered manner he opened his eyes and stared at his niece.

'*Jane Anne has that fatal old-maidish look,*' her aunt was wont to say in apology for her appearance. She was a short woman, with mouse-coloured hair and pale eyes, her lips parted slightly over her rather prominent teeth, and as she spoke she smiled a little deprecating smile. She was going out with her aunt, and wore her hat and mantle, and she carried a little reticule, with the hasp of which her nervous fingers kept fidgeting as she spoke. She seated herself beside her uncle. 'I have come to tell you something of importance,' she said waveringly.

Jerningham thrust out a finger, pointing at her, 'And I have to tell you something of importance—You look so foolish in that hat. It's more like a thing for Dinah than for you.'

Jane Anne gasped a little. 'Well, well, what is it?' he asked, stretching out his hand for the newspaper that lay beside him, and running his eye over its columns.

'I must tell you,' she went on, 'that I have taken a step of which I hope you may approve.'

'What's that?' he said, without looking up. 'Not thinking of getting married, are you? Late in the day! Some fellow been making up to you for my money?'

‘I—I—I am sure that is not his reason,’ said Miss Jerningham hastily, and her face grew red.

‘Eh! Oh ho! So that’s it!—he’s hard up, I suppose.’ Her uncle burst out laughing. ‘He’s young too, no doubt. Who is it? Forbes? No, he wants something different! Come, tell me—you’re very proud of such a conquest, I’ll be bound.’

‘I do not think that you know him, uncle. He has written to you, I understand.’

‘Oh, no doubt.’ He glanced at the pile of letters on the writing-table. ‘I haven’t opened my letters yet. What is he? Nothing, I suppose—another penniless adventurer.’

‘He is Mr. Campbell of Glarn.’

‘The deuce he is! And who is “Mr. Campbell of Glarn,” and where did you pick him up?’

‘He is a minister.’

‘I daresay! A minister! They’re all alike—they’d lick my boots for a five-pound note. Where did you meet him, I say? That’s what comes of women like you hunting off to prayer-meetings and nonsense of that sort. A minister!’

‘Mr. Campbell is a landed proprietor too, uncle,’ said Jane Anne, her voice rising, her face flushing, ‘and I made his acquaintance at Aunt Sophie’s.’

‘What! Aunt Sophie’s old beau! Ah! I know where we are now—a fellow with an old

house, and as much land as would lie on that mat, and a hundred a year ! A landed proprietor ! a minister ! Neither one nor other—neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring.’ He laughed again, genially, at Jane Anne’s discomfiture. ‘ A widower too,’ he went on ; ‘ Aunt Sophie wouldn’t look at him. He ’s been married two or three times, I declare ! A son ! Oh, I remember.’

‘ Mr. Campbell has only been married once before, uncle.’

‘ Well, and two makes twice—quite enough. D’ you remember Allan’s story, Jane Anne, of the widower who “ aye liket the leevin’ wife an’ the last bairn best ?” He ’s that kind, is he ? ’

‘ Uncle, I,’—began the poor woman, then, for she had some experience of her uncle’s character, she struggled to speak with calmness.

‘ Mr. Campbell is not in very good health——’

‘ And he is in want of money. He wants your attractions’—this with a glance that made his niece wince—‘ and my money. Very good—I ’ll find his note and send him about his business when I tell him you ’ve only forty pounds a year of your own.’ He lifted his letters from the table, and waved his hand to dismiss her.

Jane Anne stood up. ‘ I hope you won’t do that, sir,’—she drew a long breath,—‘ for I mean to marry him.’

Jerningham rose to his feet. He seldom raised

his voice, trusting always rather to the matter than the manner of his speech. 'Come, come,' he said, just in his usual quick genial way, 'this won't do—this is utter nonsense—marry! you marry! a withered old maid like you—no man alive would ever want to marry you except for what he thought he'd get with you. I'll make it plain enough to him that he won't get any of my money to patch up his old house with, and if he takes you after that, I'm surprised.' He laughed again in a jovial sort of way.

Jane Anne waited until the last chuckle had died in his throat, then she drew herself up. 'I've lived in your house, sir, for thirty years——'

'Nearer forty,' put in her uncle jocularly.

'For most of my life,' she went on, 'and you have given me food and clothes, and I thank you for that, but I've never had a kind word from you or an hour of care, and I am going now to some one who will not insult me at any rate.'

She attempted to speak with dignity, but the art is not learnt in a moment, and this was the first time that she had ever tried it: as she spoke the little bag she was holding slipped from her hands, and its contents, a small Bible and some religious leaflets, were scattered on the floor.

Jerningham pushed the Bible towards her with the point of his toe—standing with his hands in his pockets. 'Take up that trash,' he said, 'and



go away, and make a fool of yourself if you like—I'll not prevent you. You'll have a husband anyhow, if that's all you're wanting—only don't come whimpering to me for money when you find you can't make ends meet.'

Jane Anne, with a crimson face, stooped to lift the Bible, and left the room without another word.

## CHAPTER II

THERE was a very quiet wedding in the end of March—the bleakest season in that bleak northern town. Mrs. Jerningham had persuaded her husband to allow it to be in his house, also to give the bride a scanty trousseau, ‘for,’ as she said, ‘*we* won’t have to support her any longer, and she’s less likely to be asking for things later on if she gets some clothes now.’

There was but one person in the household who regretted Jane Anne’s departure—her young cousin Dinah, Jerningham’s only child. She was then a girl about sixteen, and of late had gone to school in the neighbourhood. The life in those parts at that time was much more intense and concentrated than it is in a provincial town at the present day; and the daughters of more distinguished, if not wealthier, men than Mr. Jerningham were not sent to schools in the south. So, though Dinah would be an heiress, and though her parents were both anxious that she should shine in society in the future, they never thought of any other means of education. She spent the week

at Miss Macneil's Establishment, coming back to Ubster every Saturday, and returning to school on Monday morning.

Dinah had always been a great pet of her cousin's. Jane Anne it was who had had patience with all her faults as a child. She had naturally been terribly spoilt, especially after the death of her little brother—the darling of Mrs. Jerningham's heart, who had died from choking on the stone of a plum given him by the fond mother. After his death, but for her cousin's influence, Dinah's temper would have remained quite unchecked. In some strange way, not certainly by force of character, Jane Anne had gained control over the child.

When the little thing's heart was bursting with black temper (she would set her teeth and sulk for hours) : when Mrs. Jerningham's endearments and lavish promises of sweets had failed to move her : when the sharper efforts of an irritated nurse had only made her sulk the more ; then Jane Anne would come quietly into the nursery saying, 'Dinah, dear, do you remember what I told you on Sunday about Jesus—about being good ?' or some such simple words, and after a minute Dinah would break into a sob, cling with her arms about her cousin's neck, and the temper would disappear. As she grew up, Jane Anne's timid religious ministrations became less frequent. She was afraid

to speak now to the tall, solemn-eyed girl that Dinah had become, nor indeed did Dinah any longer seem to require those gentle reproofs. She was wonderfully calm and self-contained for her age. Knowing her power, she treated both her parents and other people with a high hand. It was Jane Anne now who had begun to lean on Dinah ; so, at first, she was afraid to meet the girl after the announcement of her marriage had become public. Dinah came home as usual on Saturday morning. Jane Anne, who was waiting in the drawing-room, heard her come upstairs asking, 'Where is Jane Anne, mother?' Then the door opened, and Dinah came in. She ran up to her cousin and flung her arms round her neck. 'O Janie, I wish Mr. Campbell was dead,' was her tactful speech. It relieved Jane Anne's feelings as nothing else would have done. She took Dinah's hand, sat down beside her, and had the first moment of sympathy which she had yet experienced from any one.

'I have heard all about it,' said Dinah ; 'Annie Fraser lives at Glarn, you know. She lives quite near to Mr. Campbell : she knows the boy.' She looked a little doubtfully at Jane Anne as she spoke.

'I wish that I could take you with me, Dinah,' said the older woman, 'I mind nothing except leaving you—you will grow up and forget all about me when I am gone.'

‘No, I do not think I shall,’ Dinah answered gravely.

The wedding day was bitterly cold ; between the effect of tears shed overnight, and a red nose, Jane Anne looked, even for her, singularly plain, when she entered the big dining-room where the few guests were assembled.

Jerningham himself had gone away on business the week before. ‘There will be no fuss,’ said his wife, ‘so we needn’t have in any one extra. The servants can cook the lunch quite well.’ Besides Dinah, there was one bridesmaid, a friend about Jane Anne’s own age, who had a complete assortment of false teeth, and wore an unfortunate shade of green. The bridegroom arrived a minute late, accompanied by a very silent friend—none of his relatives were present.

His imposing presence astonished the guests not a little. He waved his hand condescendingly to Mrs. Jerningham when she began to speak to him, not listening to a word that she said. ‘A trifle late, a trifle late,’ he murmured, speaking with a curious Highland accent, ‘the coach was delayed, but it’s of no consequence, we were warmly wrapt up, pray don’t distress yourself at all.’ When the ceremony had been performed, and Jane Anne was getting ready to leave, he stood with a glass of wine in his hand, taller than most of the men in the room, glancing about him, and addressing,

in his low hoarse voice, a few bland remarks to Mrs. Jerningham. 'We will hope to see you at Glarn some day, madam,' he said in farewell; 'I'm sure Mrs. Campbell will be delighted to welcome you.' He handed his bride into the carriage with a great air, wrapping himself up in countless shawls and cloaks, again waved a condescending hand, and they drove away.

'The creature!' exclaimed Mrs. Jerningham, 'one would have thought he was made of money.'

'It's an out-of-the-way place, she's as good as dead, but she's married anyhow, and that's more than I ever expected,' she added to the bridesmaid, who was taking her leave. The few guests departed quickly.

For perhaps two days there was some conversation in the town about the wedding, and then every one excepting Dinah had forgotten all about Jane Anne. I doubt if there was any one a week afterwards who remembered her existence, or wondered what the new home was like to which she had gone. Fate had long ago written against her name the sentence of unimportance—

'None shall ask thee what thou doest,  
Or care a rush for what thou knowest,  
Or listen when thou repliest,  
Or remember where thou liest,  
Or how thy supper is sodden.'

As the carriage drove out of the rattling streets

of Ubster, and took the white road that unrolled itself like a ribbon on the moor beyond the town, Dinah stood at the window and wept. How could she guess that the chain of her fortunes also was carried by Jane Anne into that unknown future 'over the hills and far away.'

### CHAPTER III

You could 'hear the grass grow' about the old house of Glarn. A bleak little place it was, lonely and bare : a little bleak house with 'harled' walls and small windows. It stood solitary on the moor, without fence or garden : and sometimes the cattle straying down from the hills would stand so close to the little windows that their breath dimmed the panes as they huddled shoulder to shoulder gazing in at the fire. In summer too, when the casements stood open, the sheep cropping the turf about the house would lift their noses to snuff at the window ledges, shying off in alarm at any movement from within : and in the dawn of the morning, before the household was astir, the feet of the beasts might be heard on the very threshold.

On a chilly evening in the beginning of April Jane Anne had arrived at her new home.

Glarn was distant from Uster as the crow flies about seventy miles, but the coach road rounded the angle of the coast, and the journey took two or three days to perform. She had felt as they



drove along, sometimes for ten or twelve hours at a time, without passing more than one or two shepherds' huts, as if she were going into an awful remoteness from which there could be no return. Now, tired and tashed after her long journey, she stood in one of the tiny dark bedrooms looking about her in a bewildered kind of way. Town born and town bred as she was, this huge silence, broken only by the bleating of the sheep, choked her with a sense of oppression.

How dark the house was ! how small and lonely, with its narrow flagged passages and bare rooms that had an acrid musty smell. Accustomed as she had always been to luxurious living it struck her with dismay.

Often in fancy she had pictured every detail of her new home, and though her imagination perhaps was somewhat trite, she had looked into the future with confused hope.

But this was all so different from what she had imagined. Where was the charming country parish ?—those savage hills ? Where were the parishioners whose homes she had hoped 'to brighten' ? She saw none but the sheep. And was she to have no neighbours ? For the last six miles as they drove to Glarn she had seen only two or three little grey huts : but as they drew near the house she discerned a group of trees on a knoll opposite, and looked out eagerly for some

sign of habitation, then she saw that it was a little—a very little—old, low, dilapidated church.

Her husband as they drove past pointed to the few sunken gravestones that were barely visible amongst the rank grass. ‘That,’ he said, ‘is our burying-place. Many generations of our family lie there, and there I hope you and I may one day repose.’

‘I—I hope so,’ said Jane Anne lamely, for she saw that he considered it a privilege. With this cheerful sentence in her ears, the carriage drew up at the door of the melancholy house. There was immediately a sound of scuffling within, and with strange howlings and sharp barks, three or four terriers came scrambling out, jumping about the master’s knees. Jane Anne was a little afraid of dogs, and kept saying, ‘Down, down, dear,’ to them, pushing them gently away, but they only yapped the more, and scratched at her velvet pelisse. No servants appeared, and there was no other sign of life about the house.

‘Go in, go in,’ said her husband ; ‘they cannot have expected us so soon.’ Jane Anne stepped into the hall, and presently there came rolling up the narrow passage from the kitchen regions a fat old woman. She wore a tartan shawl pinned across her shoulders, and her face was red and grim.

She courtesied to her master, saying something

in Gaelic which Jane Anne could not understand, and received her own timid greeting with a dry murmur of, 'I hope yer pretty well, ma'am.' She then conducted her new mistress upstairs, and left her without any offer of assistance.

Jane Anne glanced about her with dismay, noticing the wooden bedstead, the small bleared mirror, the meagre dimensions of the room, and wondering vaguely where she was going to put all her new clothes.

This was a transplantation such as she had never imagined. Where was the dignified if simple country house that Mr. Campbell had alluded to as 'the home of my ancestors'? Where were the servants? Was that purple-faced old woman the cook, the housekeeper? Could she ring her bell, and get a light, she wondered, for she could hardly see well enough to take her things out of her boxes. She opened the lid of one of the trunks, and began with slow fidgety movements to take out some of her dresses, and lay them in the drawers, but her head was throbbing so violently that it made her giddy. In despair she sank down on her knees by the open window leaning her head upon her hands.

Out of doors the pensive April twilight lingered on, though a pale fragment of golden moon had risen in the clear sky. The air was chill, and still, and tender with the first premonitions of spring.

Down below the little church on the opposite hillside there was a running burn ; the sound of it, incessant, thin, and scarcely audible, smote upon her ears, accustomed to the cheerful noises of a town, with an unendurable dreariness, so that she hid her face in her hands and shivered. It was like a sudden relief to pain, when she heard all at once a burst of laughter, pretty, girlish laughter, and then the sound of footsteps and a man's voice calling out,

‘ Is that you, Annie ? ’

‘ Yes—I ’m going home. Has she come ? ’

‘ Yes—I haven't seen her yet. I was out when they arrived. ’

‘ Is she dreadful ? ’ asked the girl. Jane Anne did not catch the reply. She rose instantly, anxious not to listen ; at that moment the door opened, without any previous knock, and a tall unkempt servant-girl appeared upon the threshold. ‘ Supper's in, ’ she said, and disappeared.

Jane Anne glanced out at the window, and saw a girl walking swiftly away across the grass in front of the house. She waved her hand to some one standing at the door, and as she went, Jane Anne caught another echo of faint laughter.

Slowly and timidly she then made her way downstairs, pausing in the passage before she took courage to enter the dining-room, where at a table, insufficiently lighted by a pair of candles, her hus-

band stood talking to a tall young man. This must be Lewis, her stepson. She did not dare even to look at him as she came in.

The table was spread with a meagre repast. At one end a piece of mutton ham and a plate of oat-cakes : a decanter, and a jug of hot water ; at the other, a battered tea-tray, on which stood a huge dim metal teapot and some cracked teacups.

‘ I thought you might like some tea, my dear,’ said Mr. Campbell ; ‘ and allow me to present you to your stepson Lewis. Lewis, this is your step-mother.’

‘ I am very glad to see you,’ faltered Jane Anne, raising her eyes to his face.

Of all the scenes that lay before her in married life, there was none on which her imagination had dwelt so often and so fondly as this of her first meeting with her stepson.

How often she had pictured him ! A tall ‘ youth ’—so she always dubbed him in her own mind—somewhat rustic in dress and manner, but with an ingenuous countenance and a shy smile. She had dwelt upon the motherly kindness with which she would smooth the locks off his open forehead, and press it with a mother’s kiss. . . . She raised her eyes now, and saw a young man about eighteen, thin, light, and very strongly made. His hair was dark, curling slightly at the edges, and the top locks of it were bleached by

the sun to a lighter colour than the rest. His fair skin was so freckled that it looked as if it were painted with tan. He carried himself with a singular grace and assurance, and looked at her with a pair of blue unflinching eyes that made Jane Anne drop hers desperately. She had extended her hand to him, but immediately she became aware that as he stood before her he held both his hands behind his back.

‘Did you not observe that your stepmother was going to shake hands with you, Lewis?’ said his father.

‘Yes, sir,’ he replied promptly, ‘I did.’

‘Then what do you mean?’ began Mr. Campbell, but Jane Anne glanced at him imploringly.

‘Oh! please, it does not matter—I mean—it is of no consequence at all,’ she said with a nervous laugh, and taking her seat hurriedly at the head of the table began to pour milk into the teapot.

Dead silence ensued for the next few minutes, then Jane Anne made an effort to collect herself.

‘I thought that I heard a girl’s voice outside, a few minutes ago,’ she said timidly, addressing herself to the young man. ‘I did not know that we had any near neighbours.’

‘A girl?’ said her husband inquiringly.

‘Annie Fraser, sir,’ said Lewis, without looking up.

‘Ah, Annie Fraser. Yes, my dear, we have

neighbours in a *bodily* sense,' said Mr. Campbell, 'although, unfortunately, I at least can claim no *mental* affinity with Father Fraser—he is a priest. His niece, whose voice you must have heard just now, is an engaging young person, and of course she is not to blame for her uncle's position.'

'Do they live near here?' Jane Anne asked, glad to think of any female society.

'They live at Edderty, about a mile and a half away,' said Lewis briefly.

'You could not see it—it is on the other side of the wood there—nearer the sea,' Mr. Campbell explained. 'Many of the poor fisher people along the coast are Roman Catholics.'

Jane Anne remembered suddenly that her cousin Dinah had told her, that one of the girls who was at school along with her knew the Campbells, and lived near Glarn. It seemed a cheerful link with home; she brightened at the thought, remembering that Dinah's holidays had begun. This girl, then, would be in the neighbourhood for some time. She could go to see her—would show her that she was not 'dreadful.' She remembered that one of her favourite books told of the conversion of a young Roman Catholic lady who afterwards became an earnest Protestant. Perhaps this was the first work that she was to be called to at Glarn.

During these reflections the silent meal had

come to an end. Mr. Campbell then retired to his study. He was a great genealogist, and occupied himself continually amongst old papers and forgotten books, hunting up some 'lapsed title,' or verifying obscure points in the history of a great family. His own descent—traced back to Pictish chiefs of unpronounceable names—was written out large on the walls of the study. He had conducted Jane Anne into the little drawing-room—an apartment evidently uninhabited since the death of her predecessor—and there had showed her a screen painted with his own coat-of-arms, and the lozenge belonging to the deceased lady.

'Had your family any descent to speak of?' he said; but he spoke kindly, not offensively, merely as a specialist on his own subject. 'I should have been glad to have had a tree made out on your account, but, from what I can learn, your uncle's family is of very humble origin.'

Jane Anne laughed, for almost the first time in his presence. 'Oh,' she said, remembering as she spoke her uncle's exclamations about her husband, 'my uncle's father was old Mr. Van der Hulst's office-boy, I believe. I don't suppose he knows who his grandfather was at all.'

'Well, well, the wife takes rank from her husband,' said Mr. Campbell. To him the subject was a delicate one, and he scarcely understood



how his wife could treat it with a smile. When he had left her, Jane Anne took a seat by the window, wondering how she should ever get accustomed to these new surroundings. She was too tired now to go upstairs and unpack her boxes. She could not intrude upon her husband in the study, and she was afraid of staying alone with her stepson ; so she sat on, chilled and miserable, gazing from the dreary room out at the desolate moor ; at last, when a cow came outside the window, and one of its horns actually tapped the glass, and the light glittered on its eyes, she could stand it no longer. She was sure that in another moment the creature would crash into the room. She rose hurriedly, and backed to the door, not daring to take the candles with her. The dining-room was dark, but it felt warm in contrast to the deadly chill in the other room : she groped her way towards the fireplace, and sat down, glad to close her eyes and lean back her aching head.

Was it all, she thought, going to be a miserable mistake ? She had never expected much in life, but now it seemed a cruel cheat that when unasked (for she had at first been much surprised by Mr. Campbell's proposal), something new and good had come to her, it should all turn out a fraud. ' Which of you,' she thought, ' if his son ask for bread will give him a stone ? ' Had she not hoped humbly for some affection, some one to care for,

and be loved by in return, and now the boy on whom she had been prepared to lavish so much seemed determined to insult her. Then she began to reproach herself for this feeling of ingratitude. She was unused to finding fault with Providence, and hastened to lay all the blame upon herself. If it were a mistake, it must be her own fault, because she had been headstrong, and had 'taken such a step' without sufficient prayer and consideration.

Almost unawares she had begun to weep, finding the tears a relief. But then the door opened, and she heard the voice of her stepson. 'Bother Phemie!' he said; 'what has she done with the light?' The fire was very dim now. He could not see that there was any one there. Jane Anne held her breath, hoping fervently that he would go away. She knew that her voice was so choked that she could not speak without sobbing. The young man walked up to the fireplace, and bent down, feeling about for a match-box on the little table by her side.

'Hullo!' he exclaimed, 'who's this?' Jane Anne struggled to speak, but she only managed a sniffing sob.

Lewis struck a light, and it flared up for a moment, showing her face. When he saw it, he dropped the match into the grate without attempting to light the candles, stood beside her in silence,

and then suddenly he knelt down on the rug and threw one arm round her.

‘Feeling lonely?’

‘Oh yes,’ she said, shrinking away a little; she was not accustomed to any man’s arm.

‘Don’t, don’t cry,’ he said; but the poor woman, overwrought as she was, at the kind sound of his voice broke down altogether.

‘I am afraid that I have made a mistake,’ she sobbed; ‘I ought never to have come here—have undertaken duties—oh,’ she added, ‘I wanted to be a mother to you.’

‘I don’t want a mother,’ he said; then, taking hold of her hot and trembling hands, ‘Come, you must not be so unhappy, you’re strange to everything just now. It’s not *your* fault,’ he added, as if to himself. Jane Anne turned with a movement—a piteous little impulse of confidence—to him, and he bent down his head and kissed her cheek. ‘I know I’m a scapegrace,’ he said, ‘father will be the first to tell you so, but perhaps we’ll get on well enough. You must not be afraid of us all. Phemie’s all right when she’s in a good humour.’

‘She looks severe,’ said Jane Anne, thinking of the grim red face.

‘Oh, I’ll help you with her. I’m always in favour.’

‘I wish,’ she said, after a minute, ‘that the

animals did not come quite so near to the house.'

'The animals ?' said Lewis. He had poked up the fire and was standing now looking down at her, and Jane Anne had dried her eyes, and felt quite disposed for conversation.

'Yes,' she explained with hesitation. '*A cow*, when I was in the other room, came so close to the window that I thought it was coming in.'

Lewis burst into uncontrollable laughter ; she thought the sound of it delightful. Perhaps she had not made such a mistake in her marriage after all.

## CHAPTER IV

THE village of Edderty was a mere cluster of little houses, with three or four others scattered rather apart along the shore.

The priest's house, which faced due south, and was partially sheltered by the hill that lay behind Glarn, was the sunniest spot in the whole parish. It had quite a little garden, a cheerful sight in those parts where horticulture was unknown. Father Fraser's predecessor had been a man with a passion for flowers, and by dint of much skilful contriving of walls and hedges, aided by the sheltered situation, he had induced them to grow.

Ivy covered the wall of the house, and the garden itself was on three sides enclosed by high beech hedges. Common hardy blossoms only would flourish there, but at Edderty they looked like the most brilliant exotics.

Father Fraser was blind : he could not see the flowers : but he would stand among them enjoying their sweetness, as only the blind can do. He had lived alone at Edderty for some years until his niece Annie, then a little child, came to live

with him, then the house became more cheerful.

The child's appearance there had at first caused grave scandals amongst the Protestants of the neighbourhood, who, without knowing the expression 'a cardinal's niece,' had freely applied conjectures that amounted to the same thing.

After a while, however, an explanation was given, for an old maid who came with the child was roused by the hints of the neighbours into telling the whole story—which was so unpleasant that it was at once accepted as the truth. Father Fraser's brother (so the story said), also a priest, had run away with a certain lady of high rank. He died in America. Some years afterwards, she, it was hinted, had poisoned herself, and the child came to live with her uncle. Her education was paid for by her mother's relatives, who, as she grew older, had sent her to a school near Ubster, so now the old priest lived alone, except during the holidays, when Annie came back to Edderty.

Her relatives had stipulated that she should be sent to a Protestant school; and her uncle, who was far too poor to have paid for her education himself, was obliged to agree to this, only stipulating that she should receive no direct religious instruction. In consequence, the girl was brought up between two opinions. At home, her uncle, whose piety she could not doubt, alluded to Prot-

estants as heretics ; and at school Catholics were regarded as living in benighted superstition.

Annie came quietly to the conclusion that both verdicts were equally foolish. The Catholic expressions that she had learned in her early childhood came readily to her tongue ; and by habit, if she were startled, she would make the sign of the cross ; but at Ubster she went with the rest of the school to the Presbyterian church.

The acquaintance between Annie and Lewis Campbell had begun when they were little children. Knowing each other intimately by sight, their guardians had never allowed them to speak, and they were supposed to know nothing of one another. There happened, however, to be a point of meeting where, in the most natural way in the world, they became better acquainted than their elders knew.

In a lonely hut on the moors that lay between Glarn and the sea there lived an old woman who had been baptized a Catholic ; but as she had married a Protestant, she had lapsed from the Church for a space of years, and was finally regarded by both communions as a strayed sheep to be gathered in. She had no visible means of support ; for as the parish in those days took no notice of any of those who did not fling themselves directly on its mercy, so she was dependent on ' givings ' from the minister and the priest, and such small

offerings as the cottagers deemed necessary to avert the evil eye.

She steered most gracefully between the two rival communions. When Mr. Campbell himself paid her a visitation, she crouched on the mud floor while he read aloud to her in Gaelic a suitable scripture, and followed the verses with sighs of appreciation. She knelt devoutly to receive Father Fraser's blessing when he came to her door; and inside her 'box-bed' had pinned up, side by side, with fine impartiality, a coloured card representing the glories of the Sacred Heart, along with a neat Protestant picture of the old-fashioned type, showing the missionary under the banyan tree preaching to an attentive negro audience.

The two children used to meet often at her house, Lewis sent by his mother with a rabbit or a can of milk, Annie carrying perhaps a plate of cold pudding, or a little tea. Lewis at that time was a lanky boy, in a shabby kilt of the green Campbell tartan, with scratched knees, and an immense idea of his own importance; Annie a small child, dainty in her speech and movements, wearing a round hood tied under her chin, and as yet firmly convinced that she might meet the Blessed Virgin at any turn. She tried hard to convert Lewis to this belief; and after having said a prayer to beseech Our Lady to appear to them as she did



to Joan of Arc, she had once induced him to kneel with her in a corner of the deserted sheep-fank for nearly half-an-hour, in expectation of the vision.

‘She wouldn’t appear because you were a nasty Protestant,’ said Annie unabashed, when at length they rose in despair, Lewis rubbing his aching knees.

It was Annie who had been sagacious enough to give him to understand that those meetings were not to be alluded to at home. ‘*My* people wouldn’t like it,’ she said. When Catherine, her nurse, discovered in her possession a cork cage, set round with pins, containing two bumble-bees, and had questioned her severely on the subject, she answered without hesitation that it had been given to her by Our Lady, who had come down on a little pink cloud to present it to her the night before. Lewis, on the other hand, could not tell a lie, and he found it difficult to evade the truth, so that when, some time after this, his mother found him crying, he blubbered out that Annie Fraser’s nurse had died of scarlet fever, and now Annie had got it, and was going to die and go to hell. It was true enough : Annie had taken the fever, and was very ill. The people in those parts had an insane dread of infectious diseases, and the servant-maid had run away, leaving Father Fraser alone to attend to the child as best he could.

On hearing this news, Mrs. Campbell had gone

at once to Edderty. She nursed Annie through the fever : but when she came back, she took it herself and died. It made a strange tie of connection between the two households, and after that Lewis and Annie were allowed to meet as they liked. But Mr. Campbell and Father Fraser, if by chance they encountered each other in the round of their parish duties, never exchanged more than a few words.

On the day following Jane Anne's arrival at Glarn, Lewis walked over to Edderty. It was a fine morning, and the priest's house, as usual, was full of sunshine. He came up the little path that led to the house, and without knocking, opened the door of the sitting-room, and looked in.

Annie Fraser was sitting on the floor, darning away at an altar-cloth spread out on her knee. She lifted her head and nodded to Lewis as he entered, holding her fingers to her lips, and pointing to the window, where the old priest sat fallen asleep in his chair. The sun streamed in through the uncurtained window, striking full upon her face, glittering too on the gold edges of the cloth. She was a thin slip of a girl, about seventeen, with irregular features, and rather prominent pale blue eyes, that darkened suddenly with interest or excitement as she spoke. She had delicate dark eyebrows, and her hair, so fair as to look almost white, fell in soft untidy locks over her forehead.

‘Are you busy?’ Lewis asked under his breath.

‘Oh, just patching away at this old altar-cloth, as usual,’ laughed the girl. ‘I think it’s time that the Blessed Virgin sent us a new one.’ She motioned Lewis not to tread on the edges of the cloth, and then leant her head on one side, and examined the stitches she had just put in. She wore an old shabby black dress, and a skein of pink silk that hung over her left shoulder was the only touch of colour about her. It was the complete absence of any touch of self-consciousness that made her movements so charming to watch. ‘That lamb wants an eye again, I declare,’ she went on. ‘Hand me a bead from the table, Lewis—that little black one will do. Well, what is she like? Is she dreadful?’

‘No,’ said Lewis doubtfully, ‘not at all—only——’

‘Only what?’

‘Oh—only good,’ he answered, playing with the tarnished gold fringe that edged the altar-cloth, and not looking at her as he spoke.

‘Could anything be worse!’ said the girl. ‘I guessed it would be like that. Dinah Jerningham told me she was good. You don’t know how to treat a stepmother, Lewis!’

‘What would you do with one? Hate her?’

‘Not at all,’ said Annie, making dabs with her needle at the Virgin’s crown as she spoke, ‘make

her hate you—that's much better. If you hate any one, you just make yourself unhappy, and give them a chance to forgive you—as Mr. Campbell does to uncle,' she added in parenthesis. 'But if you can just manage to make them hate you, it hurts much more, and you can be good all the time. I do that at school.'

She took the silk from her shoulder as she spoke, and tossed one end of it to him to hold, while she pulled the thread. 'If your stepmother is a pious person, she'll pray for you; you can't prevent that; it doesn't do much harm. Whenever I know that Miss Inks has been praying for me, I go and put everything in my room very tidy, and then when she comes in, prepared to keep her temper, and finds everything just as she wishes it—o-o-o!' She went off into an ecstasy of laughter at the thought—laughter that had just the sound of shallow water running over stones.

'Hush, hush, you'll waken him!' said Lewis, glancing at the old man, who was sleeping very quietly, his gentle, simple face with the sunken blind eyes raised to the light. He was not very well cared for: unshaven and shabby: and his cassock was stained where he dropped his food down the front. There was nothing of the 'ministering angel' about Annie's relations to her uncle: she thought if his clothes were not absolutely torn that she did her duty very well. 'Oh,

he won't hear. He always sleeps soundly after dinner! I'm sure I wish that uncle could go and marry somebody, like your father,' she added, 'then there would be some one to look after him, and do this kind of thing,' she tugged at her work impatiently. 'Well, I can't have a stepmother—or a step-aunt—anyway, that's a blessing.'

'I think I like her,' said Lewis suddenly.

The girl stared at him, incredulous. 'What in the world has she done to make you *like* her?'

'I don't know,' he answered. 'She is so helpless.'

Annie did not understand that point of view, and she was silent. 'I'm going back to school on Monday,' she said presently. 'I won't see the Marquis. He will be in your church next Sunday, I suppose, along with his wife. I wanted to see them.'

'Why? She's not pretty, I hear,' said Lewis.

'Oh! curiosity. I've never seen them.' Then she added softly, with a glance to make sure that her uncle was still asleep: 'My aunt, Lady Jane, is his cousin, you know.' Lewis nodded. 'Uncle never speaks about him. I should like to see him.'

'Who, who, my child?' said the old man, waking, and hearing the last words.

'The Duke of Wellington, uncle,' said Annie, raising her voice clearly; 'we were talking about him.'

## CHAPTER V

MISS MACNEIL'S Establishment for the education of young ladies occupied a position very unlike the site generally selected for a boarding-school. It was a bare whitewashed building, standing within high walls that enclosed what by courtesy was denominated a garden. But no plants or flowers could stand the biting winds and showers of spray that fell upon the turf whenever the waves ran high. The cliffs that descended almost sheer below the house were of such height, that a glance from the upper windows was apt to make a stranger feel giddy.

An austere dwelling, within as well as without—the door handles and brasses glittered fearfully, and the white parlours were sparsely furnished, their chief ornamentation consisting of pencil drawings in black frames, executed by some of the more gifted pupils.

They were a hardy race up in those parts; the situation of the house, perched on the most exposed promontory of a bleak coast, was generally spoken of as 'bracing.'

In spite of its austere aspect Miss Macneil's Establishment had long been considered the most select in the county. 'Finishing' was understood to be the strong point of her educational system. '*Accomplishments*, rather than any attempt to turn my young pupils into blue-stockings,' she said. The Early Victorian horror of a learned woman still lingered in Ubster. Her young ladies read Shakespeare (expurgated by the English governess), and Thomson's 'Seasons,' and their paintings, especially of fruit, were much admired. It was, viewed from the modern standpoint, the echo of an echo—the caricature of an absurdity—and in its pitiful provincial gentility, its shams, and nonsense, something even below what the standard of the hour required. But Miss Macneil was a good honest woman, and she turned out from her Establishment solid, healthy-minded young people, who at least had learned no harm in its genteel precincts. None of them made a worse wife or mother because they could tinkle on the piano and speak a little ridiculous French or Italian; and life taught the most of them other lessons later on.

Dinah Jerningham and Annie Fraser, being the two senior pupils, were admitted to the dignity of studying in the parlour in the evenings. Annie had returned from Glarn the day before.

It was a windy night, about nine o'clock, and

the two girls sat side by side at the table preparing their lessons for the next day.

‘I saw your cousin at Glarn,’ said Annie. She kept a careful finger on the atlas ready to appear all attention the moment Miss Macneil should come in. ‘She’s quite old, isn’t she? About a hundred.’

‘I think she’s thirty-five,’ said Dinah, ‘perhaps more.’

‘I should think so. She’s so ugly.’

‘I shall miss her very much. It won’t be like home without her,’ said Dinah.

‘Lewis Campbell won’t care much about a step-mother, I can tell you,’ remarked Annie again.

‘Jane Anne will be very kind to him.’

‘Kind!’ said Annie. ‘To Lewis—o-o-o.’ She threw back her head and laughed.

‘Why do you laugh? Is he not nice?’

‘He’s,’ Annie paused, ‘like *that*,’ she said, suddenly rapping her knuckles briskly on the table.

‘Young ladies!’ said Miss Macneil reprovingly as she came into the room. Annie’s laughter stopped short. She threw an innocent glance at her schoolmistress, as if wondering who could have made the noise, and then resumed her study of the rivers of Spain. Miss Macneil seated herself at a respectable distance from the fire—book in hand, lips compressed in their usual expression of genteel firmness. The room was lighted by two



tall old-fashioned candlesticks that shed a soft light on the heads of the girls bending over the atlas. There was complete stillness indoors, for the junior pupils had all gone to bed, but the wind blew high outside, and now and then Dinah would look up with her solemn grey eyes as a shower of spray spattered against the windows. Though the spring evenings were long light, the shutters had been closed early to deaden the noise of the wind, and the deep sound of the waves breaking on the rocks below.

‘ Did you hear that shout ? ’ said Annie, suddenly looking up with dilating eyes.

‘ Miss Fraser, are you attending to your studies ? ’ said Miss Macneil. The girl flickered her eyelids for a moment, pushed the fair hair off her forehead, and bent again over the atlas, pinching Dinah’s knee under the table, at the sound—the unmistakable sound—of a gun fired out at sea.

Miss Macneil apparently heard nothing. She rose with dignity, snuffed the candles, and resumed her place by the fire.

Tick, tick, tick, the clock went on ; a coal fell on the hearth ; again the wind and spray slapped against the window-panes, while out at sea came the bursting sound of the great waves.

‘ Half-past nine, young ladies ; it is time for you to retire, ’ said the schoolmistress, so the girls

gladly put away their books and made her their good-night courtesy.

‘Let us look out at the hall window, and see if we can see anything now,’ whispered Annie as they went upstairs. But the panes were so wet with spray, and the night so dull, that they could see nothing. ‘I thought it *might* have been a wreck,’ said Annie, when they were in their own room; ‘but nothing nice ever happens here,’ she added with regret.

‘Annie, how can you speak like that? think of what it means to other people,’ said Dinah reproachfully, as she stood brush in hand, smoothing out her long, black hair.

Annie, whose toilet operations were singularly brief, had already wriggled out of her clothes and got into bed. ‘Oh!’ she retorted, ‘how stupid you are, Dinah! You never understand the half of anything. Well, anyway it wasn’t a wreck. Good-night.’

Dinah lay awake for some time, until she had heard Miss Macneil pass along to her own room. Then she fell asleep, but wakened suddenly about midnight without knowing what had roused her. Annie was sitting up in bed, calling to her in a low voice, ‘Dinah! waken!’

‘What is it?’ said Dinah, still sleepy. The wind had died down an hour before, and the night was now without a breath. The

brilliant moonshine from without poured into the room.

‘Get up and look out at the window,’ said Annie, who had not moved from her own bed.

‘Why?’ Dinah demanded. She was accustomed to Annie’s vagaries at night; they generally resolved themselves into a mouse scratching, or the wind in the chimney. But this was something more. She heard at the moment the sound of footsteps coming trampling over the turf below the window, then a loud knocking at the front door, and men’s voices talking below. Dinah jumped up instantly. ‘I shall go and waken Miss Macneil,’ she said; ‘she won’t hear in her room.’

‘Oh, don’t leave me alone,’ cried Annie.

‘Well, get on your dressing-gown and shoes. Come now.’

No one in that Establishment had ever been known to penetrate the sanctity of Miss Macneil’s apartment after the lady had retired for the night, so when the girls entered the room, Annie was not too much alarmed to forget to squeeze Dinah’s arm, pointing silently to the ‘front’ of grey ringlets that reposed upon the toilet-table.

They roused Miss Macneil with some difficulty. Her first exclamation of ‘Young ladies!’ was followed by a command to hand her her dressing-

gown, an antique tartan garment, which she put on ; and having assumed the ' front ' with a glance so severe that even Annie dared not laugh, she took the candle, and walked before them into the hall. ' Make no noise,' she said sternly ; ' I do not wish the household to be disturbed.'

The front hall-window looked out directly over the door : Miss Macneil, stepping up to it without hesitation (for she was no coward), threw up the sash and looked out, Dinah and Annie peering over her shoulder. A group of men—sailors apparently—carrying something between them, were standing below. As the window opened, one man stepped out from among the others and stood alone in front of them. ' Who are you ? What do you want here ?' Miss Macneil inquired, and the answer came distinct through the frosty silence.

' We bring a dead man, madam ; and I am the Marquis of Glarn.'

Miss Macneil withdrew her head. ' *There,*' whispered Annie, in wild excitement, pinching Dinah's arm. ' Young ladies,' said the school-mistress, ' retire to your own room, and put on some suitable clothing, and then you may come downstairs. I shall rouse the servants.'

She called out to the people below requesting them to wait for a few moments, and the girls hurried into their own room. ' Take out your curl-papers !' called Annie. ' Be quick ! never

mind anything else, put on anything. Come ! come. O Dinah, to think this is really *us*.'

Dinah was imperturbable. 'If the poor people have been shipwrecked, they must be all wet ; they will want brandy and things. Take the blankets, Annie,' she said, as they left the room.

The household was now thoroughly aroused. They heard the servants passing downstairs, and Miss Macneil, who had found time to assume a cap, called to them to follow her.

'Let us waken the little ones,' whispered Annie. 'They're sound asleep no doubt, and it's a shame that they should miss it all.'

She opened the door of the dormitory where the children slept. 'Waken ! waken, chickies !' she called ; 'something very interesting is happening downstairs.'

'You shouldn't bring the children out of bed on such a cold night,' said Dinah. But Annie had no scruples, and in another minute the banisters were crowded with them, clustering like a swarm of white bees, hanging over as far as they dared, trampling with their little bare feet on one another's toes, their hair screwed in curl-papers, their eyes wide with excitement, listening with all their ears to the marvellous tumult below, where men's footsteps were echoing on the flagged passages, and the deep rough voices of the sailors

mingled with the shrill exclamations of the startled maidservants.

‘Annie! Annie, dear Annie! do come soon and tell us something,’ they pleaded piteously, as the older girls went downstairs.

## CHAPTER VI

GREAT confusion reigned below. The big kitchen was filled with the crew of the lifeboat and men belonging to the shipwrecked vessel. Distracted female servants went hurrying amongst them with hot liquors and offers of assistance. Miss Macneil stood in the lobby in conversation with the captain of the boat, a huge man, in dripping oilskins. 'Is he seriously hurt?' she was asking as the girls came downstairs.

'It's a blow from the broken mast,' said the sailor. 'He'll be all right in a few minutes. Give him some brandy, Miss.'

Miss Macneil turned in agitation to the girls. 'Take this into the parlour—his lordship has fainted—I must attend to the others,' she said.

They were carrying the dead boy out from the kitchen now, and she hurried after them, leaving Dinah to administer the brandy. Annie shrank back into the shadow of the doorway, where she stood, shuddering, until the men had passed.

'Come, Annie, into the parlour,' said Dinah.

'He's not dead, is he?' Annie inquired anx-

iously, hanging back as she saw the figure lying in the chair.

‘No, no, he spoke to us a minute ago,’ said Dinah. She went up and poured a few drops of brandy between the lips of the fainting man, and after a moment he drew a deep breath, and slowly opened his eyes.

A strange sight indeed to have been blown by the night winds into the heart of an Establishment for the education of young ladies. In all the years that it had hung upon the wall the mirror in Miss Macneil’s parlour had never before reflected such a sight. The Marquis was a man rather under middle height, with sallow skin, that in its present pallor looked like clay. The dark hair was flattened over his temples, and he wore no coat or waistcoat. His shirt had been torn half off one shoulder, and the hand that hung limply over the arm of the chair had been scratched and was bleeding a little. As he raised his head, he looked around him for a moment, then sank back, overcome with faintness again. Dinah administered some more brandy, and in a few minutes he sat up in the chair. ‘I have been dreaming,’ he said slowly. ‘Where am I? Ah—I remember.’

‘Your head is hurt,’ said Dinah. ‘You have been stunned a bit. Are you better now?’

‘Thank you, I shall be all right in a few min-



utes, only a scratch,' he said, as she examined his hand. 'May I ask in whose house I have the honour to find myself?' he asked presently, when Dinah was tying up his wrist.

' 'Tisn't any one's house, it's a school,' said Annie, who had been standing looking curiously at the stranger while Dinah assisted him.

' A school !'

' A young ladies' boarding-school,' said Annie demurely.

He smiled at her reply. 'I fear we must have annoyed you all very much. May I go and see after those poor fellows?—I can walk quite well now.' He rose, steadying himself against the arm of the chair. 'If I could get a coat,' he remarked apologetically, pulling the torn shirt over his shoulder.

'I'm afraid we haven't any here,' Annie replied just as Miss Macneil, looking sadly agitated, appeared at the door.

'Ah,' she exclaimed, 'I am glad to see your lordship revived. I should have attended to you myself, had not Captain Anderson assured me that your faintness was a mere passing affair. Young ladies,' she turned in distress to her pupils, 'I do not know *what* we are to do, there are twelve men in there'—she waved her hand towards the kitchen—'they are soaked to the skin, and Captain Anderson declares that we must provide them with—some dry garments.'

She glanced in distress towards the open door, through which the girls caught a glimpse of the men crowding round the kitchen fire; some of them had already begun to strip off their wet things. The captain of the lifeboat hustled about shouting to the servants to help him with those who were still half insensible.

‘Some dry clothing,’ Miss Macneil repeated tremulously.

‘Our clothes?’ asked Dinah.

‘*Any* clothes, ma’am, and the quicker the better,’ roared the old sailor, coming up and catching the last words. ‘Gosh!’ he said, with an expletive that barely escaped Miss Macneil’s hearing, ‘wi’ all thae lassies, there’s surely clothes enough in the hoose.’

‘But, my good man, this Establishment——’ began Miss Macneil.

‘Can I be of any assistance?’ asked the Marquis.

‘’Tis not assistance, sir, it’s some *dry clothes* um wantin’,’ shouted the captain. ‘Blankets or petticoats—no matter, ’s long ’s they ’re dry.’

‘We have cloaks and things, and lots of blankets upstairs,’ said Dinah quickly. In a moment she had run to fetch them, and faint shrieks of delight followed her from the upper regions, where the little girls piled her arms with cloaks and clothing—some of it of the most unsuitable texture and

dimensions. She returned immediately, and threw her bundle on the kitchen table.

‘Dinah ! come here !’ called Annie, as she returned. The drowned man had been carried into the bedroom on the same floor : a state apartment, reserved for occasions when the parent of some pupil from a distance came to spend the night. ‘We can do nothing more,’ Miss Macneil was saying to the Marquis ; ‘we have tried everything.’ The two girls entered unobserved, and stood for a moment fascinated by this, which was to both of them their first sight of death. The room was furnished with a great deal of crinkly white muslin and netted frills. There, on the bed, lay the drowned lad, still in his big sea-boots. The dreadful dead face stared up from amongst the netted frills of the coverlet with wide open eyes. One of the coarse, stiffened hands still grasped desperately at the air with crooked fingers : water dripped from the body, and made a pool on the floor, and a long trail of seaweed that must have been carried in along with it, lay on the carpet—it squelched and sliddered under their feet as they came in. Annie stood stockstill for an instant, gazing at the bed, drawing her breath shudderingly between her teeth, then she turned and glided away, but Dinah went up and stood steadily looking down at the dead boy.

‘He is quite dead, poor fellow ! Nothing more

can be done,' said Lord Glarn. He gently closed the eyes, and motioned to Dinah to cover the face. 'It is a sad sight,' he said, for Miss Macneil was crying. 'Do not pain yourself more, madam. I shall send some of the men in here to do all that is necessary in a short time.' Miss Macneil and he then went into the kitchen to speak to the men, and Dinah, softly closing the door, returned to the parlour to find Annie.

'Come,' she said, 'we must go back to bed now, it is nearly morning. Miss Macneil says we are to go upstairs.'

Annie demurred, saying she could not go to sleep again, but she followed Dinah after all.

'Fancy that being Lord Glarn!' said Annie when they reached their own room. 'He's ugly for a marquis, but he speaks just like one, I think. We shan't be allowed to see him again, I believe. Miss Macneil would think it improper.'

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning by this time, and Dinah told her to be quiet and go to sleep. Annie was silent for a little while, and Dinah thought that she had begun to get sleepy, when she got out of bed and crossed the room, and came and sat down beside Dinah's bed, shivering.

'I can't sleep,' she said, ' . . . that thing downstairs!'

'Do you mean that poor dead boy?' asked Dinah.

‘Yes, yes ! it was so horrible. To think of its being down there just below us—now. Oh !’

Dinah stretched out a warm, firm hand, and patted her. ‘Don’t, Annie ! Why should you mind that ?’

‘It’s dreadful,’ said Annie in a shuddering whisper. ‘I don’t think you know what it is to be afraid, Dinah. Sometimes I feel so horrible ; seeing that has made it all come over me to-night. Oh ! don’t go to sleep and leave me alone with it.’

‘With what, Annie ? I don’t understand you. See,’ she said, ‘go back to bed, and I’ll come and sit beside you till you fall asleep.’

She tucked Annie up in bed, and sat holding her hand, hoping that she would fall asleep. Then her voice came shudderingly again : ‘It’s Something behind me, Dinah !—always—when I stop to think—Something dreadful that will come out of the dark and drag me down with it some day, I know.’

Dinah was aware that the merry creature sometimes took sudden fits of melancholy, but this was worse than she had imagined. However, nothing has a more wholesome influence upon an excited imagination than the presence of some one who fails to take in the nature of the feeling. Dinah was not sensitive to impressions. ‘Hush, child, go to sleep, and don’t talk nonsense,’ she said.

‘It’s—my mother, I think,’ went on Annie in

the same tone. 'Do you know about my mother, Dinah?'

'I have heard Miss Macneil speak of her,' Dinah answered evasively. She dreaded lest Annie should excite herself further.

'She was a great lady,' went on Annie in the dark. 'And my father, you know, Dinah, was once,' she sank her voice so that Dinah could scarcely hear, 'a priest—like uncle. Oh,' she said, 'I remember things—when I was a very little girl—in Canada.' She was silent, shivering, then she raised herself and pulled away her hand from Dinah's. '*She lives in the dark places,*' she said, '*and some day she will come for me: I too will do something dreadful, and then she will take me, and we will go away together.*'

Dinah stood up; she was tall and strong compared to Annie. She put her arms about her, and turned her on the pillow as if she had been a child.

'There,' she said, in her quiet, decided voice, 'turn round and go to sleep, and do not talk like that. It is wrong, Annie.'

'If you are there, Dinah, will you hold me back?'

'Yes,' said Dinah, in a very placid tone, 'of course I will.' Her voice seemed to reassure Annie. 'I almost think that I could go to sleep,' she murmured; then, with a titter of laughter, 'Oh! the Marquis of Glarn! Isn't it funny,

Dinah? So like Puss in Boots and the Marquis of Carabas. And to think of all those men in the kitchen in our cloaks and flannel petticoats! I think it was all a dream.' She had dropped off to sleep almost before the words were out of her mouth.

## CHAPTER VII

MISS MACNEIL, having provided as well as she could for the comfort of her unexpected guests, had retired for a few hours of repose, but she awoke to find herself on the horns of a dilemma.

‘Where is the Marquis to breakfast, ma’am?’ were the first words that greeted her in the morning. The shutters in her chamber had not yet been opened. For a moment she hesitated, at a loss for a reply. ‘Hand me my front,’ she said—she felt it was not a problem to be faced in her night-cap. Then, having given the maid leave to open the shutters, after a moment’s reflection, she gave her orders with dignity.

‘The two young ladies, Maggie, will breakfast this morning along with the junior pupils in the schoolroom’ (Dinah and Annie generally had breakfast along with her); ‘the Marquis in the green parlour with me. His lordship will probably be a small eater,’ she said. (In those days a small appetite was considered a sure indication of gentility.) ‘But,’ she added, ‘you may send up a turkey’s egg.’



The good lady, having to adjust her bandeaux for the eyes of a marquis, was a few minutes late. As she went downstairs she reiterated her command, 'The young ladies breakfast in the school-room,' and sailed towards the door of the green parlour. It stood open. She paused a moment in astonishment. Breakfast was on the table; the tea urn bubbled invitingly; everything, as her first anxious glance had assured her, was all right; but, on the hearthrug, stood the Marquis, and 'Do it again,' he was saying. 'Look, is that right?' He held up his hands, round which Miss Annie Fraser was engaged in twisting a piece of string into those convolutions that make the artless game known as 'cat's cradle.'

'No, no, this is the way. How big your thumbs are!' said the girl, standing almost on tiptoe to pull the string over them. They appeared to be already on terms of the most friendly—to Miss Macneil's mind, of the most unsuitable—intimacy; and the schoolmistress could scarcely repress her indignation and surprise sufficiently to greet her noble guest with suitable courtesy.

He appeared to have suffered but little from the experiences of the night before: assured her that he had slept well on the sofa allotted to him; and though he still wore on his wrist the bandage that Dinah had wrapped about it, he declared that the wound was a mere scratch. He had borrowed a

sailor's coat from some one, as the men had got their clothes dry by this time. Miss Macneil having finished her stately inquiries concerning his health, then turned to Annie.

'Miss Fraser,' she said, in a tone of severe displeasure, 'I sent you a message desiring that this morning, you and Miss Jerningham should breakfast in the schoolroom.'

'Did you, ma'am?' said Annie. 'Indeed, I never received it. Shall I go to the schoolroom now?' she asked meekly, dropping her eyes.

'Pray do not alter your usual arrangements on my account,' Lord Glarn interposed. 'Allow me to breakfast in the schoolroom—with the men—I'll take breakfast anywhere.'

'There is no occasion,' said Miss Macneil, with dignity. 'Be seated, Miss Fraser. Will you have some tea, my lord?' she asked, in her most genteel tones.

'Will you have an egg, my lord?' asked Annie, with even greater dignity, in the same tone. Miss Macneil had frequently found fault with her hopeless lack of reverence for any one; laying it down, with all Annie's other faults, to the sad fact of her being a Catholic. It was a period when persons of high rank were considered—nominally at least—to be of much more importance than is, outwardly, the case at present. Perhaps society was none the worse for the salaams accorded to nobility.

‘Miss Fraser and I find ourselves quite old acquaintances,’ said Lord Glarn; ‘at least, by name.’ He glanced at Miss Macneil before he added, ‘We have some mutual connections, I understand.’ Miss Macneil was surprised by his acknowledgment of Annie’s left-handed connection with his family. She wondered how he had found it out. ‘We have an acquaintance in common too,’ he went on—‘young Campbell of Glarn. I know him well. Miss Fraser tells me that the other young lady whom I saw here last night is a relative of his stepmother’s.’

‘Miss Jerningham, I presume, *did* receive my message,’ remarked Miss Macneil to Annie.

‘Evidently, ma’am,’ she replied; ‘she must have gone to the schoolroom.’

The Marquis was now looking pensively into the shell of his first turkey’s egg.

‘This salt air gives one quite an appetite,’ he remarked.

‘’Tis most bracing,’ said Miss Macneil; ‘I only wish that our beloved Sovereign could have the benefit of those breezes. She has nearly recovered from her recent indisposition, I understand.’

‘It makes one thirsty too,’ he said, finishing his second cup of tea.

‘There is much domestic happiness at Windsor, I am informed,’ continued the lady. ‘Does your lordship find the turkey’s egg too large—some

people do. I shall order some hens' eggs to be brought in.'

'Oh, thank you, perhaps another turkey's egg,' her guest responded with alacrity. Miss Macneil was astonished. No young lady in her Establishment had ever been offered, or would, under her eye, have dared to accept of a second helping of any viand.

'I fear there may be no more in the house,' she said; 'we have had such an unexpected call upon our larder this morning; but perhaps you would partake of a very *thin* slice of the cold beef. The Prince Consort, I am told, when in the country, relishes quite simple fare.'

Annie very demurely helped him to a shaving of beef; then, lifting her eyelids with a flicker, she said, 'Perhaps this is not thin enough; will you cut it for yourself?'

When the hungry young man had got the cold beef by his own plate, he was too well employed to maintain the conversation at the level expected of him. In the morning light, now that he had lost his deadly pallor, he looked considerably younger than he had appeared the night before.

He had a strong, thoughtful face. There was something about the shape of the head and modelling of the features slightly suggestive of a cast from the antique, but the classic outline here and there was blurred. The most remarkable thing

about the face was the look, almost like that on the face of the dead—not as if expression had never been there, but as if it had been all withdrawn, leaving a mere mask behind it.

When he smiled, however, the lines of the face relaxed, and became almost genial. He evidently found his gravity a little tried by Miss Macneil's conversation, and attempted presently to divert the current by inquiring if she knew if Mr. Jerningham was at home at present.

'I was coming to Ubster to see him,' he said, 'on business. I must go over there this morning. Is Miss Jerningham an only child?'

'An only daughter, alas!' said Miss Macneil, adding (these were the palmy days of the early Victorian era), 'Our Queen has quite a little circle about her now.'

'Ah, yes!'

'Does the Marchioness appear much at Court?' she inquired.

'No—o,' he said deliberately; 'she is a good deal engaged at home.'

'I forget if you have any family, my lord?' pursued Miss Macneil kindly, resolving to study the Peerage more carefully in future, and impress upon her young ladies the advantages of a careful acquaintance with family details.

'No, madam, unfortunately, I have no children.' The heartfelt, sympathetic sigh with which the

lady greeted this announcement was too much for Annie's composure.

'Will you excuse me, ma'am?' she said, rising; 'I think the English class is about to begin. I must go to the schoolroom.'

She ran in and caught Dinah round the waist. 'Dinah Jerningham,' she called out, laughing, 'go and curl your hair! You are to drive the Marquis over to Ubster. Isn't the carriage coming for you this morning? He is going to see Mr. Jerningham on business. There is much domestic happiness at Windsor, he assures us, but he has no family himself. He has eaten a turkey's egg, and a whole round of cold beef for breakfast, and he looks now as if he could eat Miss Macneil. I think he's a wolf in disguise. I think it's a fairy tale. I told you so last night. Those are not real sailors in the kitchen; they are kelpies or something, and I think they will entice us down to the shore and drown us all!' As she spoke, she had pulled Dinah along the passage that led past the door of the room where the dead boy had been laid the night before: she had for the moment forgotten all about it.

'Hush! hush!' said Dinah, 'do not make a noise here, Annie.'

Annie's face changed in an instant; her laughter died away, and her eyes grew dark and wide. She caught Dinah's hand and hurried her past the

door ; then they stood together and looked out from the hall window in silence. Below upon the rocks, there lay the broken ship, black and shapeless now : the waves came and went about it, like cruel foaming lips licking their dead prey. Annie shuddered, and would not look again.

## CHAPTER VIII

MR. JERNINGHAM'S carriage came as usual that morning to take Dinah home. Annie Fraser had been asked to come along with her that Saturday ; and although Miss Macneil scarcely thought that it was suitable, she could find no good reason why the Marquis should not drive to Ubster along with them ; on such a day of wind and rain it was but natural that the choice should be offered to him. Dinah was already seated, and Lord Glarn stood by the door when Annie came running down. She wore a fur-lined sacque, for the day was bitterly cold ; her bonnet was lined with the palest blue, that, faint as it was, was yet bluer than her eyes. She dressed with no care, and the strings were knotted awry, and as she held out her hand to be helped into the carriage, a hole in her glove was visible. When they had once started she threw herself back in her seat with a burst of delighted laughter ; she did not give any reason for her mirth, but neither of her auditors seemed to require an explanation. The Marquis sat looking at her, as he had done in the morning, and Dinah



took everything or anything that Annie might do as a matter of course.

When they reached the house in Ubster, Dinah conducted Lord Glarn to her father's office, and then took Annie upstairs to see her mother.

'Money,' was Mr. Jerningham's inward exclamation when his visitor was announced, but he greeted him cordially enough. If Lord Glarn's business was not money, it was the next thing to it—he had come to speak about the sale of some timber of value on the estate. He seldom lived in that part of the country, and cared little about the look of the place as long as he was not there.

Before he left he said a few words to Mr. Jerningham about Glarn, adding something about the marriage of Jane Anne to Mr. Campbell. Mr. Jerningham frowned.

'A poor man and a poor place, I understand,' he said; 'I don't know what possessed the woman to do it.'

The Marquis smiled. 'Glarn is Naboth's vineyard to me,' he said. 'It's nothing but an old rattletrap of a house and two fields, but I take my title from it, and my father and my grandfather before him tried to buy it back in vain. The Campbells won't give it up. This man is as poor as a rat. He wanted the son to be a minister too, I believe, but he won't do that.'

'Oh, he does nothing?'

‘ Well, they say he ’ll study law, and he went for a year to Aberdeen, I believe, but all he does now is to hang about the place and shoot rabbits.’ He paused, looking at Jerningham, and added, ‘ You should take him into your office, Mr. Jerningham ; give the lad a chance.’

‘ Oh, I can’t afford to be generous,’ said the rich man crossly, as his visitor departed.

But the advice of the great (unlike that of the wise) is seldom given in vain, and in the course of a few days Jerningham addressed a letter to Jane Anne. In this epistle he tactfully stated that in his opinion she had done an exceedingly foolish thing in going to bury herself alive at Glarn ; he thought that, on the whole, she would not find married life as easy as she had anticipated ; and finally, he wound up with an offer to take her stepson into his office on trial for a short time. He might live with them and he would ask no premium at first.

‘ And that’s a better chance, tell him, than your grandfather ever had, and he died worth half a million,’ he added, in conclusion.

This offer was received by Lewis with laughter. He saw no attractions in Mr. Jerningham’s office, nor in the prospect of dying worth half a million, and even muttered something contemptuous about ‘ trade.’ Jane Anne put away the letter in inward perturbation, for she pictured her uncle’s

face if she wrote a refusal. Her timid nature was always falling between two stools, and she could not have any more words with Lewis about the matter. She had begun to lean on this young man, just as an ivy plant, or (that being too strong a vegetable to compare with Jane Anne) as a pea-shoot, which you may see growing to a certain height without support, gropes about with its tendrils, until at last it finds a stick to lean on ; so with all her weak nature she turned and clung to the young strong one beside her. In a week Lewis and she were friends ; in a month he used to sit by her ; and she was horrified, and yet laughed, in spite of herself, at the things he said, gently correcting him at times for what she considered his profane expressions. He was an utterly heedless creature about trifles. He put a can of worms on her work-table, took her silks to tie his fishing-lines, left dogs on the sofa, and pipes in the drawing-room, committed daily thousands of small errors most trying to her prim ideas. But none of these things weighed with her against the sense of support and security she felt in his presence. His instant decisions, his low, frank voice, and the straight way he looked at one as he spoke, even the recklessness that would have made a more sensible woman grave, used to fill her heart with a kind of elation. Was it not brave to see any one who as yet had never known the meaning of

fear or hesitation ! She liked to watch him, and in her own mind would wonder if there was any young man in existence to compare with him. Poor lady, her first timid efforts at 'work' in her own household met with scant success. When she, after much hesitation, managed to address a few evangelistic words to 'the lass,' they were received in stolid silence ; then, after a minute, the girl broke into a sudden giggle, and fled from the room. A second attempt, asking Phemie if she 'had found the truth,' was no better. The old woman looked at her with a twinkling eye. 'That I have,' she answered, 'long before you was born,' and she wiped a greasy knife upon her apron, while her mistress stood before her crushed and awkward.

Jane Anne was afraid, as I have said, to reply to Mr. Jerningham's letter, and afraid to speak more about the matter to her stepson, so she waited on for a few weeks in the hope that time might help her. It did. The Marquis arrived at Glarn, to occupy a lodge which was only a few miles away ; and one day, as he was riding through the wood, he met Lewis Campbell.

It was a brilliant morning towards the end of May ; but although the sky above was without a cloud, inside the pinewoods the light was very dim. Lord Glarn stopped his horse, standing where the sun struck down on the soft roadway.

Behind, and on either side, the ghostly procession of the thin pine stems disappeared in the distance. The wood was very still. 'How are you, Campbell?' he said. 'Back at home again?'

'Yes,' said Lewis, coming and standing by his bridle, looking up at him frankly, 'I couldn't stand the law—six months of it were enough for me.'

The older man studied his face for a moment before he asked, dryly, 'You're going to do nothing, then?'

'If my father won't allow me to do what I like, I'm not going to——'

'To do what he likes, eh?' said Glarn, smiling. 'You want to be a soldier, I suppose?'

'Well, yes; it's the only thing I'm fit for,' said Lewis. 'They'll never make a lawyer of me—not if they brayed me in a mortar. Old Jerningham, my stepmother's uncle, wrote and offered to take me into his office, but catch me!'

'I only wish I had the chance,' said the Marquis.

Lewis stared. 'Chance of what, sir?'

'Of making my own life,' he answered, and his face was even more than usually impassive as he spoke, leaning over his saddle-bow, and laying his fingers for an instant on Lewis's shoulder. 'If I were your age, and my own master, poor—and—free, I should make life something worth living,

I can tell you. Look here, Campbell, if you take a bright blade, and fling it in the damp grass there, and leave it unused, how long do you suppose it will have any value? Man!' he said suddenly, a quiver passing over his cold face, 'for all you're worth, get out of this and work—break stones—do any mortal thing, if you wouldn't lose your own soul.'

He withdrew his fingers from the young man's sleeve, and gathered up the reins. 'And that's disinterested advice,' he said in parting; 'you'll go and make your fortune, and my last chance of buying Glarn will be gone.'

Late that evening Lewis asked Jane Anne if she had replied to her uncle's letter. When she answered no, he told her that he would write to Mr. Jerningham and accept his offer.

The Marquis rode slowly back the six long miles that lay between the lodge and Glarn. Trees, trees, trees, on either side, all slim and straight and tall, vanishing into the shadows like processions of ghostly soldiers. The horse's feet made no sound on the spongy road. Twice the man who was riding sighed, slow despairing sighs, then he struck his horse suddenly, and rode out of the shadow of the wood with a face impassive as a stone.

## CHAPTER IX

THE two years which followed, though they were unmarked by any striking events, formed, for some of the people in this narrative, that important but uninteresting time of transition between the character, which is merely the outcome of early circumstance, and that more distinct character which appears when we begin to choose our own ways. Dinah Jerningham had been finished as far as Miss Macneil's Establishment could finish her ; and the lady reluctantly, but candidly, had advised Mr. Jerningham to send her to school in London for a year. 'With her prospects,' she said, 'I feel that perhaps a higher degree of polish than it would be possible for her to acquire in this quiet corner would be advisable.'

Dinah accordingly had gone to a school in Kensington, a highly superior school, for it was whispered amongst her former companions that in this Establishment the young ladies wore white kid gloves all day—a fresh pair every second morning. Annie Fraser had remained at Miss Macneil's for a few months after Dinah left, and then she too

had gone to finish her education at a convent school in Brussels. Miss Macneil felt this to be a sore blow. She had hoped that her training had been slowly drawing Annie away from her early errors, but now she feared that all would be undone.

Dinah came home, a great, tall girl, still with the same solemn eyes and rather sallow skin. Have you observed how sometimes a girl returns from school, when she has only been away for a year or so, just as you may have seen a man come back to his native country after half a lifetime of exile : she looks about her as if all the familiar things were strange, as if the very people she met (in whose lives perhaps her short absence has scarcely been observed at all) were altogether different. Time is a poor measure for these changes. When childish things are put away and the soul begins to be conscious of itself, it stands and looks around it amazed, and at once begins to study every one from a new standpoint.

The unfortunate thing is that it is generally with those nearest that the inspection begins.

On the day of her arrival, as Dinah drove along the streets of Uster, she kept looking out eagerly for the well-known places, and they all took on a new appearance to her eyes. Why had she never noticed how grey the houses were—how clean and wide and cold the streets ! Now the carriage



rattled over the cobble-stones in the market-place, where the big fish were laid out on the ground. Was it not a quaint custom ? and why had all the people in the streets such fresh and rosy faces ? How small the church looked ! How the air smelt of the sea ! Now she saw a crowd of masts and the broad flags at the edge of the harbour. . . . Surely there were more ships than formerly, and their own house stood much closer to the quay than she had remembered.

She felt very strange as she crossed the hall and went through the familiar rooms. Mrs. Jerningham met her then for the first time, and Dinah saw her mother from the new standpoint. Her absent exclamation of, 'Oh, Dinah, have you come already ? I wasn't expecting you for half an hour,' sunk into the girl's heart.

'May I go down and see papa ?' said Dinah in a few minutes : she went down to the door of the office, not formulating the thought distinctly, but feeling that she must see her father too in this new light.

Mr. Jerningham looked up from his writing as she came in. 'Well, Dinah, is this you ?' he said. 'What a big girl you are now ! Come home at last, have you ? I've spent a pretty penny on you this last year or two—hope you've something to show for it, eh ? Be turning all the young fellows' heads, I suppose. We've got

Campbell here now—Jane Anne's stepson, you know—must be careful—penniless lad. I'll have nothing of that sort with him, remember. Going away? Well, well, I'm very busy.'

He turned again to his desk, and Dinah went slowly upstairs. She sat down in the drawing-room (it was growing dusk now), and wished she were back at school. They would just be going down to tea now from the big classroom. Then she thought of her former school life at Miss Macneil's, and wondered if she should like those girls now. Some of them lived in Ubster, and she wondered if they too had grown up and changed as she had done.

'Jane Anne's stepson.' At thought of her cousin a hundred memories of childhood came back to the girl; and she realised that if Jane Anne had been here to welcome her, the house would not have felt so lonely and so strange. Jane Anne with a stepson! How strange to think of it! Dinah began to wonder what he was like, and at that very moment, as she sat in the growing dusk, the subject of her thoughts, Lewis Campbell, came into the room. Dinah knew at once who it was, although this was the first time that they had met.

'I am Dinah Jerningham,' she said, looking at him in her large solemn way, speaking with a mixture of gravity and frankness that gave her

manner a dignity singular in so young a woman. Standing beside him, she was nearly as tall as he.

Lewis looked into her honest eyes as she shook hands with him ; and never afterwards, I think, did he quite forget the sense of assurance, the feeling of home coming that he felt at that first moment of their meeting. ' You have just arrived, Miss Jerningham ? Why, I declare, I am more at home in the house than you are,' he said.

' Everything seems so different,' said Dinah. Then she turned to him abruptly, ' Will you tell me about Jane Anne ?' she asked ; ' I had two or three letters from her when I was away. She says she misses you very much.'

Lewis laughed. ' We're great friends now. She allows me to say anything I like to her.' He watched Dinah curiously as he spoke. She was very unlike the other girls of his acquaintance. He wondered how she and Annie Fraser would get on. Since coming to Ubster he had become perfectly domesticated in the household. Dinah being away, as there was no other young person in the house, Mrs. Jerningham appeared to take it for granted that Lewis should fill her place. It was from no great kindness, as perhaps Lewis knew, but simply from a sort of stupidity that couldn't have imagined anything else. All women liked him, trusted him, and were apt to depend too much upon him ; for as yet his heedless, careless

disposition was nothing much to lean on. Jerningham got on with him well enough, simply because no cause of dispute had happened to rise between them. He gave him no money, and Lewis asked for none ; and that, after all, was the worst thing (in Mr. Jerningham's opinion) that a young man could do. He assured himself, after a few days, that there was going to be no fear of a flirtation between Lewis and Dinah—that would have been a matter requiring instant suppression—but having satisfied himself upon that point, he left them very much to themselves. In the course of a month or two there sprang up between the two young people a sort of comradeship, as much like that of brother and sister as such a relation could be. On Lewis's side, at any rate, it was quite dispassionate. He stood a little in awe of the girl ; most young men did ; her cold, rather abrupt manner, with its direct simplicity, made them afraid of her. Lewis, whose acquaintance with women had hitherto been very limited, found in Dinah something which was new to him.

He had the idea that all women were weak, clinging things, full of shiftings and turnings and trying to the temper of man. Here was one who always meant what she said ; who executed everything that she had to do with beautiful precision ; to whom Duty, and Law, and Order were more than words. Dimly he began to com-

prehend this, and to adjust himself to meet her thoughts.

One day when they had been out somewhere together, and were walking back to Ubster, they passed the tower of the lighthouse ; it rose daz- zlingly white in the sun, its stones joined and knit- ted together, stronger than the solid rock on which it stood. Lewis looked up at it, and then he looked at the girl beside him. By nightfall, before the dangerous twilight had dimmed the sea, the great lights of the tower (more punctual than the stars) would be kindled to shine unflagging till the dawn.

He looked at it and then at her again. ‘ That is like you, Dinah,’ he said suddenly.

Dinah saw no force in the comparison. ‘ It is nearly four o’clock,’ she said ; ‘ I promised mother that we should be home by four,’ and she walked on, quite unconscious of what he had meant to imply.

With all this respect and admiration for her character, Lewis never thought of falling in love with Miss Jerningham. Much more likely that he would have fallen in love with any of the other girls he met, whose faces attracted him, and of whose natures he knew nothing at all. For such is the strange fact—that first love will take for its foundation any mortal thing except respect. Van- ity, folly, a sweet voice, a pretty shape—for any

of a thousand trifles the young are eager to barter away their whole store of affection. Therefore all Dinah's good qualities only formed a barrier against anything like a love affair between them that winter.

In summer Lewis went back to Glarn.

## CHAPTER X

JANE ANNE was charmed to have her stepson at home again. The year of absence had seemed very long to her ; the house when he was gone had been so dark and quiet. She had not energy of character sufficient to carve out any new pursuits for herself, and in consequence she was often, to put it plainly, sadly dull. Every Sunday she used to attend her husband's ministrations in the tiny, empty old church. Mr. Campbell did not care how many auditors he had, so long as he had one on whom he could fix his eye and to whom he could address his long discourse. Above everything he loved the sound of his own voice, and that was heard quite as well, if not better, when the church was empty ; so, during the long months of winter, Jane Anne sat every Sunday in the square uncushioned pew that faced the pulpit, and listened, or appeared to listen, with humble reverence. She had been rather inclined before her marriage to worship men (in the abstract), and especially ministers ; but I think that those long mornings in the church at Glarn, when a damp

coldness seemed to creep to her very heart from the musty wooden floor : when all that she could see between the small diamond panes of the window was the great old larch tree that flung its wind-tortured branches out over the headstones which marked the old graves, were more than sufficient to cure her of that weakness.

She had tried 'to interest herself in her husband's pursuits,' for she had all the most conventional and the best intentions ; but he soon discovered that she 'had no head for genealogy,' and would not even allow her to verify a date for him.

Her household occupations were no more satisfactory. She was afraid of Phemie, and her timid reproofs were utterly and silently scorned by 'the lass.' The house, if anything, became more uncomfortable than before.

Lewis arrived at home in the beginning of August, when the reluctant summer had come at last even to those solitary places, flushing the hills into their brief bloom. The moors were red, and smelt like honey, and the little crofts behind the lonely farms grew yellow—a pinkish yellow, that told of the damp soil on which the thin crop was raised. Jane Anne used to take her sewing out of doors—she had great ideas upon the employment of time, and was seldom without some piece of futile stitching in her hands. She worked a little for a foreign missionary society, putting fonder



prayers for the salvation of the heathen into her work than went with many a larger donation. 'It was difficult to know exactly what would be of use,' she said, in the note that she sent along with the parcel when she dispatched it—at a cost of carriage more than double the value of its contents.

The day before Lewis arrived she had done her best to brighten up the house for him, but with small success. He thought her looking very haggard and dull when he saw her first. 'We'll have Dinah Jerningham here to cheer you up,' he said; 'I know she would like to come. She said so.'

'Dinah is a handsome girl now, I suppose,' Jane Anne remarked.

'No,' said Lewis, laughing at her tone, 'not very. She's big and tall, nearly as tall as I am.' He considered for a moment. 'Her hands are very white,' he said, glancing down at his own brown ones.

'Does she like you, Lewis?' said his step-mother softly.

'Me? Oh, well enough. I suppose so. We saw so much of one another.'

'Do you—you did not—I mean,' said Jane Anne, who could seldom be explicit.

'Do I—I did not—no, I did *not*,' he answered gaily. 'Don't you know, mammy, that Miss

Jerningham is an heiress ; every man in the county knows that, I can tell you. She is not for "the likes o' me," and I don't want her either. You should see the way that Mr. Jerningham looks at every young fellow that comes into the house.'

'I think I know,' said Jane Anne, 'but Dinah is not worldly, I am sure.' She changed the subject rather obviously by saying in a minute, 'Annie Fraser has come home, Lewis.'

'Has she ? When ?'

'Oh, last night. Phemie told me. She said she met the housekeeper.'

Lewis jumped up, he had been sitting on the grass beside his stepmother's chair. He looked at his watch. 'I shall be back by seven,' he said ; 'I'm going over to Edderty.' He walked away without more ado, and Jane Anne watched until he was out of sight. She sighed rather anxiously, for Annie Fraser was no favourite of hers.

When he entered the bare little sitting-room that he used to know so well, Lewis felt his heart beating faster than usual. He did not try to explain to himself why, or what it was that was exciting him, or what he expected to see. He stood waiting, examining the chromo-lithograph of the Holy Father that hung on the whitewashed wall, noticing the exceeding poverty and shabbiness of the few bits of furniture. The chair where the old man generally sat had a torn cover on it ; the

carpet was absolutely threadbare ; but there was a little smart satin slipper that might have done credit to Cinderella lying on the floor at his feet. Lewis picked it up : he was regarding it critically, balancing it on the palm of his hand, when the door was thrown open, and he heard a voice that he knew—a very enthralling voice it was, with a little sort of drop in it every now and then, something between a laugh and a sob.

‘Enter Miss Annie Fraser,’ she called, and stood in the doorway, curtsying to him grandly.

‘O Annie, you’re just the same as ever,’ said Lewis, springing forward to meet her.

‘I ! the same ! There, you show how greatly you are mistaken, sir ! I’m grown up, quite finished. Look at me carefully ; if you touch me, I’ll break.’ She spun round and round on tiptoe before him ; then, stopping, looked up at him quickly. ‘You are not quite so tall as you were. There, don’t be angry—I only meant that I was taller ! How do you get on in Mr. Jerningham’s office, Loo ?’

‘Oh, well enough.’

‘And with Dinah ?’ she asked immediately.

‘I like her very much.’

Annie glanced at him under her eyelashes. ‘I don’t know how I am going to live here,’ she went on. ‘I’ve carried a can of soup to three bedridden old women this afternoon, and tidied

up the altar, and read uncle his newspaper, and it's only five o'clock. It was much better fun in the convent at Brussels.'

'You won't have much use for your fine satin shoes here, Annie,' said Lewis, still holding in his hand the little slipper.

Annie looked at it and sighed. 'No,' she said, 'unless they dance by themselves without me. Oh, but I will,' she brightened up suddenly. 'I'm going to every dance in the county. Uncle says I may. I shall go to the ball at Ubster in winter, Lewis, and you will see all the men crowding round me wanting me to dance with them. Oh! you know nothing about me now.'

She silenced the bird in its cage by the window in the most summary manner, by throwing a cloth over it. 'Uncle likes the creature,' she observed. 'I suppose if you can't see, you want to hear all the more. He hears so much; it makes me feel quite queer sometimes. He knows who you are by the sound of your feet.'

The old man came into the room at the moment, and she motioned to Lewis not to speak to him. He came forward slowly with his hand stretched out before him; smiling faintly to himself as usual: a little more bent, a little paler, with his simple face more faded, and his cassock more threadbare than when Lewis had seen him last. 'Are you there, Annie?' he asked.

‘ Yes, sir.’

He walked towards the window, pausing suddenly.

‘ There is some one in the room, Annie.’

‘ I am, uncle,’ she said.

‘ Some one else.’

Annie laughed, holding him back with one hand.

‘ Well, who ? Tell me ? Do you know ? Stand there and tell me.’

He stretched out his hand and said, ‘ Shake hands with me, Lewis ; you ’ve come back.’

Lewis looked at him astonished, and Annie nodded, as much as to say, ‘ I told you so.’

He sat down in his chair by the window, leaning back with his hands on the arms.

‘ It ’s a long, dark night,’ he said simply. A quick flush of sympathy crossed the young man’s face. He bent forward, laying his strong hand over one of the old priest’s feeble ones, looking earnestly into the blind face with his brave, blue eyes.

‘ Indeed it is, sir, but you have got Annie back again now.’

Her uncle smiled—the faint smile, that is almost scorn, with which those who are greatly afflicted, and who bear their affliction with patience, receive the cheap efforts of consolation offered to them by others who know nothing of what they have to bear.

‘Annie has quick eyes,’ he said ; ‘bright eyes, I daresay. I have never seen them.’

Lewis looked into them at the moment. ‘They are very bright,’ he answered, and Annie dropped them and smiled, well pleased.

## CHAPTER XI

THE candles had just been lighted on the altar : Annie observed with distress that one of them was dripping wax on to the velvet cloth. ' I shall have to remove that to-morrow,' she thought. It was nearly dark now. The choir rose to sing. Annie leant on the rail in front of her, her wandering thoughts not following a word that they sang ; suddenly, she became aware that the door opened softly, and that some one came in whose entrance caused a flutter in the little church.

She could not see who it was, and could not decently turn round at that moment. Could it be Lewis Campbell, she wondered, and arranged herself as she dropped on her knees, with a view to looking behind her when she rose at the end of the prayer.

She managed a swift glance over her shoulder, which was perfectly decorous, but the dusk did not enable her to distinguish who the stranger was ; she could only make out that it was not Lewis.

Another hymn began, and a voice that did not

belong to the choir was singing. Annie listened. Where had she heard it before ?

*‘ Rose of the World ! Star of the Sea !  
Mother of sinners, pray for me ! ’*

Annie remembered. She did not need to look behind her again. She bent her head piously, and fixed her eyes on her service book when her uncle got into the pulpit. ‘ Is his wife with him, I wonder ? ’ she thought. ‘ I should like to see her. Will he remember me ? ’

Half an hour later, when her uncle had gone into the vestry, as she stood extinguishing the candles upon the altar, she was not altogether surprised to hear some one walk quietly up the empty aisle.

‘ How do you do, Miss Fraser ? I am afraid you have forgotten me, ’ said Lord Glarn.

Annie daintily extinguished the second candle and held out her hand.

‘ Indeed, I have not, ’ she said. ‘ I knew who it was when I heard your voice. ’

He paused a few paces away from the altar, and stood watching her as she slowly extinguished the candles.

‘ When I came to Glarn last, you were away from home. At school ? ’ he said at length.

‘ At another school, ’ said Annie, ‘ not Miss Macneil’s—a school in Brussels, where everything was quite different. ’



She stood in the full blaze of the candlelight, the dusk of the church behind her. As she spoke to the Marquis, she went on putting out the candles one by one, and as each went out her face changed with the changing light. At last, when only one was left, she said, smiling, 'Now you must go out, for I have to lock the door of the chapel and wait for my uncle there.' He went slowly down the empty church, and paused at the open door. Annie's face, with the pale, golden hair like a nimbus round her brow, was the only thing in the light. Then she extinguished the last candle, and he heard her light steps come down the aisle. They stepped over the threshold together into the pure evening stillness, and Annie locked the church door. 'I wait here for my uncle,' she said.

They were silent for a minute ; then Lord Glarn turned to her. 'You are a Catholic, of course, Miss Fraser ?'

Something in the tone of the question made Annie laugh.

'I suppose I am. I have been half and half. When I was at Miss Macneil's, you know, we went to the Presbyterian Church ; then, of course, at Brussels it was the other way.'

'It's a good thing,' he said, as if he were speaking to himself, 'to believe in something ; it's a great safeguard—to young people.'

‘Have you felt the want of it, my lord?’ Annie asked, with the little laugh in her throat that made her speech so sweet. He looked at her for a minute closely before he spoke.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘as a boy I was exceedingly religious. I might have gone through life like that, but circumstances,’ he paused, ‘have obliged me to see things as they are.’

‘There!’ cried Annie, ‘you’ve just explained quite what I mean; that is why I can’t pray to Our Lady, or to any one else. I just happen to see things always as they really are, not as they should be, according to what good people say.’

‘Annie! Annie! are you there, child?’ called her uncle, coming slowly round the little path that led from the vestry.

‘Yes, uncle. Here is Lord Glarn.’

She drew her uncle’s hand through her arm with no unnecessary tenderness, such as some people would have displayed to one so aged and so feeble. The Marquis watched them after he had bid them good-night. He observed Annie’s manner to the old man without criticism. It was evidently no part of her character to play Cordelia.

‘What a charming face though!’ he said to himself as he turned away. ‘She looked half a spirit in the light of that last candle. ‘No man

will ever get tired of that woman—till he hates her.' From which we may judge that the observation of other people, without the charity that 'believeth all things,' is apt to lead to somewhat dreary conclusions.

## CHAPTER XII

AFTER that day when he had first seen Annie on her return, Lewis was a great deal at Edderty. He dared not go on Sunday, but the next day, and the next, and the next, and so on. It was not only natural, it was almost inevitable, that he should fall in love with her. Annie had expected nothing else ; indeed, nothing less would have satisfied her, for what other thing could she have to amuse herself with during those longer summer weeks when she must stay at home. During the previous winter some of her mother's relatives had begun to interest themselves in the girl. One lady who had even gone to see her at Brussels, had taken such a fancy to Annie, that she had brought her back for two or three months to London. The taste of gaiety which she had enjoyed there had made Annie suddenly blossom out into quite a fashionable young woman.

It required apparently but a touch to do so. She had found her natural element, and took to it kindly. So it made it all the worse for her to have to return to that dull, bare house. She was

surprised and excited to find that Lewis Campbell appeared considerably more attractive than most of the men who had dangled after her when she was away.

She did not deny for a moment to herself that she liked him. She was not afraid of being run away with by her feelings, and entered into the thing gaily, as if she were playing a game.

‘Now, don’t talk nonsense, Loo!’ she would say when he became very ardent; ‘you know, everything that you say is impossible.’

‘But why, why, Annie?’ he would entreat, trying to make her look at him. She generally spoke with her eyelids dropped. They were walking home together one afternoon when they had met at the old woman’s cottage, just as they used to do years ago when they both were children. Jane Anne of course had been delighted that Lewis should undertake any ‘work of charity.’ She loaded him with offerings and tracts. (Margaret could not read, and much preferred the tobacco which Lewis gave her on his own account to all his stepmother’s gifts.) He had found Annie already in the cottage, and after a very brief visitation, he turned to walk home with her. ‘Why, why, Annie?’ he repeated, standing still to try and make her look up.

‘Oh, because it’s impossible!’ said Annie again, in her light, indifferent tone.

‘Why, because you’re a Catholic?’ Lewis asked.

‘Oh no,’ she said quietly, ‘not that at all—just because you’re poor.’

‘Have I not been working hard for the last year,’ said Lewis, ‘working at work which I hate, all to make money some day?’

‘Very well, make the money then. A man is worth nothing who can’t make money.’

‘Would you love me if I were rich?’

‘Of course I should,’ was Annie’s prompt reply. ‘It would take only a very little to make me love you, Loo, I know that; but I really couldn’t be foolish enough to do it as long as you are poor. Do you really think,’ she went on, ‘that I am going quietly to marry you, and come to live in a house like Glarn, without money, without neighbours, with your stepmother, just sitting in those dark rooms looking out at that hillside and the sheep, for perhaps twenty years, and then to die and be buried under a horrible grey stone in that ghastly little churchyard by the house?—Why, I’d much rather live on with uncle all my life.’

Lewis lifted his head with a sudden movement of pride. ‘I do expect it,’ he said. ‘I think if you loved me you would sit for twenty years in the vault of the church there in darkness itself, and think nothing of it. I won’t be bargained

with, Annie. I'll bargain with no woman to love me if I make money.'

She looked up at him, catching her breath, admiring, in spite of herself, the way he looked at her and spoke. She inclined towards him with an involuntary yielding gesture, and he threw his arm round her and kissed her again and again. After a minute Annie drew herself away. She smoothed her cheek with her hand—it burned red—and asked him softly, 'Will you always care for me like this, Lewis?'

She had not anticipated such a scene.

'If *you* do,' he answered; his voice broke into sudden passion: 'Oh! my love, my love, do you want me to make you promises about that?'

Annie looked at him curiously out of the corners of her eyes for a moment. He folded her little hands together and laid them against his mouth and covered them with kisses.

'Promise,' said Annie, 'promise a big promise—that you will love me always.'

Lewis moved a step away from her. He stood bareheaded and stretched out his hands, and lifted his face to the sky.

'For ever and ever and a day beyond it,' he swore, and Annie laughed her little gurgling laugh, and drew her face away when he would have kissed her again.

He left her at her own door, and she went in to

the little sitting-room. It was empty, and she sat down in her uncle's chair by the window.

'I did not make myself,' she said, speaking as if to another person; 'I was made this way. I do not see that it is any better to pretend you are what you are not. I do not do that at least. Will he love me always? There is nothing to love.'

As for Lewis, he walked home again, holding his head high, whistling to himself as he went.

As he came into the dark house, old Phemie came up to him. 'Mister Lewis,' she said, in a significant whisper, 'I'm thinking you'll better be moving those rods and guns of yours from the west room—yon's wanted now.'

'Why, for what, Phemie?'

'For the King that's coming,' she said, with a chuckle at the young man's dumbfounded exclamation of 'The king that's coming——' until the usual interpretation of the country saying swept across him.

'By Heaven, woman! that's bad news for me,' he said. 'Who's wanting that?'

'No the mistress, sir, the feckless body. She's jist to sit doon, and fold her hands, and wait for 't—never a thing prepared. It's your mother was the brave leddy—hech! hech! I mind well how she was proud the day you were born! "See my bonny boy, Phemie," she would say; "his eyes



are as blue as the stones in my ring !” ’ She rolled away mumbling, and Lewis stood staring before him, a torrent of feeling, anger, shame, jealousy, rising at his heart.

‘ Have you come back ? ’ said his stepmother, coming up to him. He started, and would have turned away without answering ; but she looked so worn out and timid with circles under her eyes, and her thin face twitching nervously as she spoke, that he could not but be sorry for her.

He followed her into the drawing-room, and sat down by her side, took one of her hands, and held it gently between his own. As he spoke the blood darkened his cheeks under the tan. ‘ Mammy,’ he said, ‘ Phemie has been telling me that you want the west room. I ’ll clear out all my things to-morrow.’

Jane Anne’s fingers closed convulsively over his hand. She covered her face with her handkerchief. ‘ Yes,’ she faltered, ‘ if I live—if—if——’

‘ Yes, yes, it ’s all right—of course, it is—you must not be afraid. Don’t fret yourself about it,’ said Lewis, soothing her. Jane Anne could not have brought herself to allude to the matter to any one, and it was a moment of intense thankfulness to her when she realised that Lewis knew about it, for she had dreaded his reception of the news.

He left her after a little and went off to the west room—a place filled with his own belongings,

which had been his own nursery ; where he used to spend most of his time as a boy. Now another child was going to inhabit it. It seemed like a ludicrous dream, and the strangeness of it drove all thought of his own affairs out of his mind for the time.

Next morning he had all his effects cleared out of the room, leaving on the wall some of the pictures he had cared for most as a child. Phemie regarded them grimly. ' She 'll up with the texts in place o' these, sir. It 's I that 's wondering if there 'll be onything ready against the time comes—for ever sewing, and never making but things for the black heathen, that I 'se swear even the negroes 'll never put on.'

## CHAPTER XIII

THERE was scarcely a sound in the whole forest. Lewis sat still and listened, but he could hear nothing except the droning of the bees in the heather at his feet. With the burning stillness above and the grey silence around him, it was like something in a dream. Presently there came a light footstep up the road ; still he sat and waited, looking on the ground. He did not move or break the luxurious pleasure that it gave him to hear each foot-fall coming nearer and nearer between the beating of his heart. Then a pause, a catching of skirts on the grass, a shadow before him, and he started up, snatching off his cap, and looking at her in a dazzled sort of way. ' You 've really come,' he said, as Annie seated herself on the edge of the stone.

She appeared to have one of her fits of absence, and kept looking past him, away into the woods, staring through the ghost-like procession of the tree stems that stood thick to left and right. ' How quiet this place is, Loo ! ' she exclaimed presently. ' I think that after my death my ghost

will walk here, just wander about for ever threading in and out amongst those stems.'

'I like bare open places better,' said he. 'Do you remember, Annie, the day we watched for the vision of the Blessed Virgin in the old sheep fank? How sore my knees got, and she never came!'

'Of course not; I knew she never would.'

'Do you remember how you used to say that you would marry me then, Annie? Now you are really going to do it.'

'I—I'm not quite sure,' said Annie, and they both laughed.

'Now, that is the only thing necessary in Scotch law,' said Lewis, "'consent of both parties.'" We might be married to-morrow if you were quite sure.' He asked her suddenly, 'Annie, do you believe in any one?'

'Yes.' He waited eagerly for her to go on, but she only laughed. 'Not you, Loo! you don't know your own mind by half.'

'Who is it then?' he said sulkily.

'Myself,' answered Annie. 'I know what I'm doing—always; I never do anything with my eyes shut.' She looked at him seriously, almost as a mother might look at a child for a moment, then quickly began to chatter and to laugh again.

The long hot afternoon wore away without a cloud in the brilliant blue above them, without a sound except the grieving of the stockdoves in the

deep thickets behind. 'They sit in the dark and cry there all day long,' said Annie, holding up her finger to make him listen.

'Cry! they are making love.' The gurgling, grieving sound broke softly through the trees again and yet again.

'No,' said Annie, dropping her voice to a whisper, just as she used to do when she told him marvellous Catholic stories of the saints long ago. Lewis, brought up a bleak Presbyterian on 'Fox's Book of Martyrs,' used to love those tales. 'No,' she went on, 'it's a soul that keeps remembering—always remembering and can't forget. Don't you hear it, "*It was sweet once,*" it says, "*Sweet once, but now it's done—it's done,*" and it refuses to be comforted, and just goes on and on.'

They listened again in silence for a minute. The sun that had mounted so high in the heavens had begun to descend; a faint, fresh breeze went through the grey stems.

'It's done, it's done!' Lewis repeated slowly, raising his head and looking to the west.

'I must go home,' said Annie.

'Wait a moment, I want you to sign this,' he said. He began searching in his pocket for a scrap of paper. 'Well, this will do. See, write on the blank page. Shall I do it first?'

'Yes, let me see how it looks.' She watched him kneeling on the ground, tracing the words

with difficulty upon the uneven surface of the stone that he used as a table. Then she bent over him and read in her clear voice—

‘I hereby declare that Annie Fraser.’ He stopped and tore off what he had written, and began again. ‘I hereby declare before God——’

‘Stop,’ said Annie, ‘there ’s no need of that.’

‘Why not ; it is before God surely ?’

‘Oh well, go on.’

‘Declare before God that Annie Fraser is my lawful wife.’ He signed his name, and handed the document to her, but Annie looked at it askance. ‘Go on,’ he said ; ‘sign it.’

‘If I do,’ she said, ‘you must promise never, never to tell any one, Loo, till you have money enough of your own to marry me properly.’

‘But if you sign that, you will be married properly. A court of law would consider that as valid a marriage as any.’

Annie raised her eyebrows. ‘Very well ; only you must promise me that you will never tell any one about this without my leave.’

‘How fond you are of promises !’

‘Promise,’ said Annie again. She looked up at him, the flickering shadow of the trees thrown upon her face, holding the pencil in her hand, as if uncertain whether she would sign the paper or not.

‘Well,’ he said, ‘I promise.’

‘ On your word and honour ? ’

‘ On my word and honour. ’

‘ Never ? ’

‘ Never. ’

She drew a deep sigh of relief.

‘ Go on ; sign it then, ’ he said impatiently, but Annie was turning the paper in her hand.

‘ Who is the letter from ? ’ she asked.

‘ That—oh ! it ’s a note from Mr. Jerningham, I think. Tear off that page. Go on, Annie. ’

Annie, however, did not tear the letter. She folded it up and up, and twisted it in her hands ; then she said, ‘ I ’ll take it home and look at it, Loo ; I won’t do it in a hurry. ’

Lewis groaned. ‘ Oh, you are such a child, ’ he said ; ‘ you seem never able to make up your mind about anything ! ’

‘ I don’t do it all in a hurry, as you do, any way, and then repent afterwards. ’

‘ Very well, take it home with you, and look at it all night if you like—a week if you choose—only do it some day. You ’d better give me the note though ; you don’t want that. ’

But Annie put the letter hastily into her pocket. ‘ Hush, ’ she said, ‘ don’t speak so loud ; there is some one coming. It is the Marquis, ’ she added, as a figure on horseback emerged from the shadow of the wood into the open bit of road before them. They stood silent, as he passed without looking to

right or left. On the spongy roadway his horse's hoofs made no sound : he rode slowly, a good horse, and made a pleasant sight with his easy, graceful movements and dark thoughtful face. His head was bent, and he seemed to notice nothing about him as he rode.

'Doesn't he look well?' said Annie when he was out of hearing.

'Yes, why should he not? Who should look well if not he?' And as she turned round with a glance of scrutiny at him as he spoke, Lewis laughed and straightened his shoulders, looking at her with his frank eyes; Annie, after gazing at him for a moment as he stood there, slim and straight, amidst the straight stems about them, said in her childlike way, 'What a pity that you have no money, Loo!'

The sun was burning red as they took their ways home.

'*It's done, it's done, it's done,*' cried the stock-doves from the dark thickets, mourning their sweet mourning, and refusing to be comforted.



## CHAPTER XIV

IN October, when Lewis returned to his work at Ubster, Miss Jerningham could not but observe some change in him. He was not nearly so talkative as before, and seemed always to be thinking about something different from the subject in hand.

But whether his thoughts were pleasant or not, Dinah could not tell. He did not, as she noticed, get on so well with her father as he used to do. His work now brought him more in contact with Mr. Jerningham, and their two natures were bound to disagree. Jerningham was accustomed to overpower every one with whom he had anything to do, excepting Dinah ; but he now began to find beneath Campbell's youth and carelessness something, which at first showed itself only by a word here and there. But flint had struck on flint, and Dinah, watching, knew that there could not long be peace between them. Lewis was not idle during working hours : he gave in one way the greatest satisfaction to his employers : but the whole thing seemed to be done with a touch of swagger,

as much as to say, 'I do this for a freak, because I choose ; I drop it any moment that I like.'

'He will never make money,' was Mr. Jerningham's reply to his partner's commendation of the young man's abilities.

There was a ball in Ubster that winter, a great affair, that had excited the imagination of all the youth of the country for some time beforehand. Dinah had persuaded her mother to allow her to ask Annie Fraser to spend some days with them and go to it. She and Annie corresponded occasionally, but this was their first meeting since they parted as schoolgirls three years before, and Dinah looked forward to it with interest. She had noticed (for some things make the most obtuse marvellously sensitive) how, when she mentioned to Lewis that Annie was coming to stay with them, his manner became suddenly alert, just as it used to be. She heard him go singing about the house, something which to Dinah's Protestant ears sounded a song ; in reality, it was merely a line of a Catholic hymn that he had picked up from Annie, the hymn that was most often sung in their little church. Lewis stood looking out at the window the afternoon that Annie was going to arrive.

*'Rose of the World! Star of the Sea!*

*Mother of sinners, pray for me !'*

he sang in his charmingly true voice.

'Is that a song ?' Dinah asked.

He started as if she had interrupted his thoughts. 'No, a hymn—that I've heard some of the people at home singing,' he answered. There was a rattle of wheels on the cobble-stones of the courtyard before the house. 'There she is,' he exclaimed, and went away to meet Annie at the door. Something made Dinah stay behind. She did not want to see him meet her. She stood up waiting, and presently Annie came running into the drawing-room, with both hands stretched out before her. It was a dark afternoon, and the room was lighted by a great fire. Annie brought a breath of frosty air along with her : her face was white with cold, and frost sparkled on the edge of her furs.

'Oh, Dinah Jerningham ! You heiress ! Is this you ?' she cried, lifting her little cold face to be kissed. Dinah greeted her very warmly, then they stood and looked at one another, Dinah somewhat embarrassed. Annie, never embarrassed at any time, was merely occupied in criticising her.

Dinah drew a chair up to the fire, and Annie sat down opposite to her, dropping her muff on the floor. They exchanged remarks upon her journey, then Dinah began to feel at a loss for conversation. When two people who have once been intimate meet again, after some years, unless the correspondence between them has been singularly close, it requires tact on both sides to prevent

some awkwardness at their first meeting. Annie had no experience of feeling at a loss with any one. She appeared perfectly natural.

‘Well, Dinah,’ she began, looking at Dinah critically as she sat opposite to her, ‘you’re not exactly a beauty, but you’re ever so much better looking than you used to be. How ugly I am, am I not?’

‘Indeed you are not,’ said Dinah, laughing.

‘Oh, I am, just now, when I’m blue and green with cold, as I am to-night; sometimes I’m not so bad. Do you remember the last time we met, the day you left Miss Macneil’s for good? How she told you you had “great responsibilities.” You look as if you had now; your eyes are so solemn. Do you remember the Marquis, Dinah? I have seen him several times at Glarn. He is going to the ball to-morrow night. He asked me about you the last time that I saw him. I told him that you had married a Polish Count and gone out to Siberia.’

‘Oh, Annie, you are just the same as ever. How can you be so foolish?’

‘Well, one must say something. Have you many adorers, Dinah? I suppose so?’

‘I—no,’ said Dinah; ‘I haven’t any.’ She spoke gravely.

‘Oh, poor thing! Well, I’ll hand you over some of mine; I have more than I know what

to do with,' said Annie in her quick, absent way.

Dinah had heard this already from other people—female friends—not likely to rate Annie's attractions too highly. She looked at her now, wondering where her fascination lay. Indeed, with Annie Fraser that was always the provoking part of it ; even an honest woman like Dinah, anxious to see the truth, could not have told you. You might begin at her soft, colourless hair, her brown face with the pale skin. Yes ; she had certainly delicate eyebrows ; but if you took her to pieces you could find a hundred faults ; you could find, if you were critical, nothing to praise ; and, lo ! when you had exhausted your criticism, there she was, with her charm unassailable as ever, to draw men's hearts after her as the rivers of water.

'Do you like Lewis Campbell, Dinah ?' she asked presently, and Dinah gave a grave assent. 'Your cousin dotes on him,' Annie went on. 'It's the funniest thing to see them going to church together, and she stands and looks up at him in such a worshipping way. I wonder how he will like the new baby.'

'Baby, Annie ? Whose ?'

Annie laughed. 'Oh, did you not know ? Well, I suppose it is funny. It will be a queer baby, I should think, but it 'll give her something to do.'

‘ Oh, it ’s not possible—Jane Anne ! ’

‘ Yes, it is ! Queer, isn ’t it, to think of a person called Jane Anne with a baby ? You ’ll have to send it a silver mug and a spoon, Dinah, for I ’m sure there will be nothing for it. They have no money. How people can be so silly, I don’t know.’

Dinah was silent. A host of pictures rose in her mind one after one. She saw herself again a little child in the nursery, sick, sitting up in bed listening to the sounds going on down below. There had been a dinner party in the house, her nurse had left her alone, and seemed to have forgotten her, and she was hot and thirsty ; then the door opened, and Jane Anne came in, an orange in her hand, and she sat on the bed and soothed the child to sleep. Then she saw herself, sulky and passionate, sitting under the table in the nursery, grinding her little teeth together in blind rage against nurse, who had punished her for some childish fault ; and Jane Anne came in and coaxed her out from her hiding-place, and whispered to her gentle words that always rang like silver in the child’s dark thoughts, ‘ *Learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart,* ’ or (a favourite saying of Jane Anne’s), ‘ *He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.* ’ It was partly the incongruity of ‘ taking a city ’ and Jane Anne that affected Dinah in this last. Remem-

bering these things, she felt a lump rise in her throat. How forgetful she had been in the new interests and wider experiences of her youth of that kind friend of her childhood, from whom she had learned the first lessons of her faith. Now Jane Anne was alone, amongst people who were still strangers to her, for she had told Dinah in her letters that she could not 'penetrate the reserve of any of her few neighbours.' Alone, ill perhaps, and weighted with the sense of a new responsibility that Dinah felt sure her helpless hands could never carry.

Annie's chatter flowed on, but Dinah gave scant attention to it. She was very silent all the evening, so grave that Annie laughed at her. 'You're as solemn as a judge, Dinah. It's a thousand pities you're not a Catholic, you'd have made such an impressive lady abbess, praying all night before the altar. Do you know that they wanted to make a nun of me at Brussels, and that old Lady Jane—who's supposed to be a Protestant too!—said she thought it would be a very good thing! Fancy me a poor Clare with naked feet and half starved! I'd rather be warm in Purgatory!'

'Annie, do not speak in that way; it is wrong. You ought not to laugh at what you believe.'

'But I *don't* believe it, that's just what it is. How can I? and you don't either, Dinah. All

that you say about religion is just because you think it suitable.'

Dinah looked at her without speaking. They were sitting together talking by Annie's bedroom fire. Annie had her front hair twisted up in curl-papers, her eyes gleamed with laughter. She looked like some little goblin thing as she sat combing out the long, pale strands of hair and chattering by the fire. 'Is there *any one*,' she went on, 'who would sacrifice anything that was real for any flummery about right and wrong? Take all the people you know, Dinah. Your father? Would your father lose all his money for "conscience" sake?'

'No, Annie, but you must not——'

'Well, well, you must take real people if you're going to look at the truth. Would your mother give up—say her dinner, her carriage, her house?'

Dinah was silent.

'Let me think? Would Lewis Campbell give up——' She paused, looking curiously at Dinah under her eyelashes—'give up success, pride—anything?'

'You're wrong, Annie, quite,' said Dinah, with sudden vehemence. She stood up, and looked down at Annie, speaking with a depth of feeling that she seldom showed. 'He would—I am sure that he would. I do not know what he believes, but I know that for anything he does believe in—'



for honour, for any one he loved—I am sure that he would give up everything.’

Annie laughed till tears stood in her eyes. ‘I believe you are in love with him, Dinah!’

A slow flush gathered under Dinah’s sallow skin, but she looked steadily at the other girl. ‘Have you known him since you were a child, Annie, and do not know that he could never do anything mean?’

‘But, bless my heart, Dinah, do you think every one who is not religious is mean?’

‘I think,’ said Dinah, ‘I *know* that if we have no help from Heaven, we all are capable of anything.’

Annie smiled. ‘Well, I believe there are some people—Miss Macneil, for instance, and your cousin—who would give up anything for what they believed.’

‘Yes, of course, both of them would.’

‘Exactly, because they’re both old maids (your cousin is just an old maid married), with nothing to give up.’

Dinah stooped to bid her good-night. ‘Let us think about ourselves, Annie, and not about other people.’

‘Oh, very well; I don’t pretend to be good for a moment. Good-night, Dinah. I’m going to dance with the Marquis to-morrow, and ask him if he’d like a turkey’s egg, and whether he’d give

up all that he has for righteousness' sake. It's only those that have little to lose that are so devout, Dinah !'

In her own room Dinah stood for a few minutes looking out at the window into the still frosty night.

'O God, give me a true heart,' she prayed, 'and help me to be honest with myself.'

## CHAPTER XV

THE next day was one of bitter sparkling frost. Out of doors the causeways of the town rang like iron underfoot, and as the frost grew keener in the evening every sound gained a strange distinctness. All day carriages had been driving in from the country, so that inns were crowded with strangers and servants : by the evening it was all astir. The carriages of belated arrivals from a distance passed in from the main road, the horses clattering and scrambling on the uneven streets. Lights shone from every window ; against the purple sky the lamps in the harbour hung like stars. Indoors the great old-fashioned house was bright with candles, and warm with roaring fires. Annie was in brilliant good-humour. She came into Dinah's room to display her dresses. Dinah was sitting at the mirror, her maid doing her hair : her face was very grave, and she had replied with indifference to the woman's remarks about her gown. Annie entered smiling, holding the bodice of a ball dress on each arm. ' Shall I wear this to-night, Dinah, or the green net ? ' she asked. She stood on the

hearthrug in her silk slip, with the light on her bare arms and her white bosom, holding up the green gauze against her face. Dinah glanced at her own reflection in the glass ; her sallow face looked plain and heavy—at least so it seemed to her—but Annie was wonderfully transfigured by high spirits and excitement. Dinah had never seen her look like that before. She understood her charm then. She thought of Lewis, standing as she had seen him the day before, his handsome head bent forward, his eyes on the door, waiting for Annie to come in.

She considered the dresses for a moment, and then she said, ‘ Put on the other, I think ’ (it was not so pretty), and Annie, nodding to her gaily, took up the other bodice and went off to finish her toilette.

When she was gone Dinah sent her maid away. She got into the rich gown that lay on the bed, hurriedly, without any of those little pats and touches to it that mark a woman’s interest in her dressing. Its outlines were rather harsh, and it was not becoming. She tied the ribbon round her neck, gave one more glance in the mirror, and then she knelt down and laid her head on her arms. ‘ I am ashamed of myself for ever,’ she whispered ; ‘ Annie would never have done anything so mean as that.’ Then, rising, she went and knocked at Annie’s door.

‘Annie, I’ve come to beg you to wear the green dress. I think, after all, it does look better. Yes, much. Can I help you?’

‘Very well,’ answered Annie carelessly, ‘just as you like; I believe it is the prettiest of the two. I’m late, Dinah; my hair won’t go up to-night. I’ve a hole in my stocking, and I’ve lost one of my slippers.’ Dinah stayed to help her, rustling about in her own rich gown.

‘What a silk! I wish I were you. No, I don’t!’ cried Annie, laughing. In a few minutes she had given the final touches to her toilette, and they went downstairs together. The hall was brightly lighted; Lewis and Mr. Jerningham were already waiting for them there. As they touched the last steps of the stairs, Annie, spreading out her crisp gauze skirts in either hand, went whirring off down the length of the hall.

Both men laughed as she passed them like a pretty winged moth.

‘Doesn’t Dinah look like a mulatto in that hideous dress? She’s not pleased to-night—no wonder, looking like that,’ Annie said to Lewis as he helped her out of the carriage, when they reached the rooms where the ball was held. Dinah and her father stood for a minute greeting some acquaintances in the lobby. Annie looked at Lewis and saw his eager face. She drew her hand from his arm to follow Dinah and Mrs. Jerningham,

saying in a low voice, 'I've forgotten all that, Loo ; I've forgotten everything. I'm going to enjoy myself to-night without thinking about anything disagreeable.'

'Disagreeable, Annie ?' said Lewis.

'Well, serious ; it's the same thing,' she answered, floating away from him.

'That is Miss Jerningham, the heiress,' said the young men to each other when Dinah came into the room, but there was a slight stir when Annie passed by.

Annie Fraser was one of those women who can give themselves up to gaiety with an abandonment that is very rare. She forgot to be jealous, she forgot to be vain, she simply was alive with enjoyment from her head to her heels. Her eyes grew dark with excitement, her face irradiated with mirth. She looked as if the first breath of music would float her away.

But to Dinah's ears as the night went on the music grew harsh and deafening ; the lights, the colours, and the forms of the dancers, passed before her like a fevered dream. She saw only two people distinctly—Annie, smiling and gracious ; Lewis, taller by half a head than most of the men in the room. At last she saw Lord Glarn enter, and then she knew that he went up to speak to Annie. Annie danced with him more than once ; as she was an entirely insignificant person, of

course every one in the room kept looking at them, but this only heightened her enjoyment.

Dinah stood for a moment without a partner, in one of the deep window niches, watching them, then she saw that Lewis was close beside her. His eyes were fixed on Annie, and as he leant forward his face darkened : a line ran up his forehead from the inner corner of each eyebrow, giving it a strangely hard expression, making him seem suddenly ten years older. Dinah observed him for a minute in silence, then she said in a low voice—

‘ She ’s only amusing herself, Lewis.’

He started and turned round. ‘ A cat does that with a mouse,’ he said bitterly, ‘ but the mouse dies.’

‘ Are you or the Marquis the mouse ?’ asked Dinah, smiling. ‘ Neither of you are very like one.’

Lewis laughed ; his brow cleared. He sat down by Dinah and began to play with her fan.

‘ Did Annie ever tell you——’ he began suddenly.

Dinah stopped him : ‘ Annie never told me anything of any importance about you and her.’

When the music ceased, Dinah rose, saying she must find her mother.

Meanwhile Annie was saying to the Marquis, ‘ There is Miss Jerningham. Do you recognise her ?’

‘I don’t know that I should have known her again,’ he answered ; ‘she has changed a good deal. More than you have,’ he added, looking at her.

‘I was so much surprised to see that you knew me when you saw me at Glarn,’ said Annie innocently, her eyelids down ; ‘I thought you had forgotten all about me.’

For answer, Lord Glarn drew something from the breast of his coat. ‘Have I forgotten?’ he asked, bending towards her, holding out a little handkerchief.

Annie looked at it, and burst out into little trills of laughter. ‘It belongs to Miss Jerningham,’ she said delightedly. ‘*She* tied up your hand—you have forgotten. I sat and looked on. See D. J. in the corner of it! You have looked at it with great care, my lord!’

Just at that moment Dinah passed by them. ‘Come, Dinah,’ she called ; ‘here is something which belongs to you.’

Dinah paused, looking at them with astonishment.

‘This is yours, I believe, Miss Jerningham,’ said Lord Glarn ; ‘but if you do not claim it, perhaps I may be allowed to keep it—as a memorial of an interesting occasion.’

‘It may serve to refresh Lord Glarn’s memory,’ said Annie, adding when Dinah had moved away,



‘so that the next time he wishes to make a pretty speech he may make sure of the facts beforehand.’

‘May I have it back again—from you?’ he begged, holding out his hand. Lewis was watching them at the moment. He saw Annie give something to Lord Glarn, who put it with exaggerated care into the breast-pocket of his coat.

‘When you give keepsakes, Annie, you should choose a less public place,’ said Lewis, as he stood by her side in the supper-room a few minutes later.

‘Oh!’ she replied innocently, ‘you saw it; he asked if he might keep it.’

‘And you gave it to him?’

‘I? no,’ said Annie; ‘it was not mine to give; it belonged to Dinah Jerningham. If you are going to be jealous, Loo, I shall send you away.’

‘Annie, I am not jealous, you may do as you like for me—but for your own sake.’

He came near, his blue eyes shining, the lines deepening up from his eyebrows, his voice low and intense. ‘Do you know that a woman who——’

‘Hush! hush! what are you going to say? Half a dozen people can hear you.’ Annie floated away a pace or two with a swirl of her gauzy skirts, speaking in the same light voice so as not to attract attention, but she grew pale.

‘Are you not my——’ began Lewis in a still lower tone, but she had turned away adroitly and

began to chatter to Dinah, who was standing near.

‘Look, Dinah—there—between those two fat men,’ she said, pointing out some one on the other side of the room. ‘Do you see that woman? Do you know who she is? She has been glaring at me ever since I came in.’

‘Take care, Annie, you will be overheard,’ said Dinah. ‘Do you not know who that is?’

‘No, how should I? There are so many fossils here,’ said Annie, glancing about them, where there certainly were a considerable number of ladies who might have been so described. Scions of all the country houses in two counties were there—of all ages. At that date, in those parts, a lady who had passed her first youth, generally wore, when she appeared in public, some garment which was hereditary in the family—a flowered satin skirt, sent home by some cadet of the house from China, or an ‘Indian scarf,’ or at least her mother’s wedding gown ‘done up’ by a local dressmaker; so, many of the ladies present, though they wore their robes with a fine independence, presented figures that were picturesque rather than fashionable.

But the woman Annie indicated was no maiden aunt, or dowager in an adapted gown. She was not more than two or three-and-thirty, and she wore a dress of grey silk faced with a shade of

acid pink, cut in the extreme of the fashion. Her figure was shapeless, and from the pale, mottled face her eyes looked out, vacant of all save some malign expression, that flickered into them every now and then as she talked.

‘That is the Marchioness,’ said Dinah under her breath, for the lady had risen, and was moving past them down the room.

‘*That!* Good Heavens! She is just like a toad,’ said Annie; and indeed, when the lady paused for a moment close beside the two girls, Dinah noticed with a curious sense of repulsion, that the back of her hand—the hand that bore her wedding-ring—was marked with brown mottled patches upon the dull skin.

Annie drew a deep breath when she had passed. ‘He married for money, they say; he might have done it cheaper than that.’

‘She may be good,’ said Dinah.

Annie laughed scornfully. ‘Very; she may be a saint, but she is just like a toad to look at!’

The crowd was beginning to lessen now, and people were going away. Lewis followed Lord Glarn when he left the ballroom. ‘May I have a word with you?’ he said, as they stepped into the corridor.

‘Certainly; what is it?’ The Marquis glanced at him for a moment, then turned to his servant, who waited at the door. ‘Drive on,’ he said;

‘ I shall walk back to the inn.—Well, Campbell, what do you want ? ’ he asked pleasantly, using words that came naturally to one who was accustomed to being asked for favours.

‘ But a trifle, sir—a little handkerchief that I saw Miss Annie Fraser give to you a short time ago.’

The other man stopped short and looked at him. They had walked on about a hundred yards up the street—the broad market-place of Ubster.

In the sky above them the stars were beginning to fade before the dawn ; the frost lay white upon the stones ; the silent houses were shuttered up, and their voices rang in the still air.

‘ It does not belong to you,’ said Lord Glarn.

‘ Annie Fraser belongs to me,’ said Lewis.

Glarn looked at him, then, with a slight smile, he handed him the little handkerchief. ‘ Ah, in that case I have nothing to say—here it is. May I advise you in future, Campbell, not to bring a lady’s name into discussion in a place where it may possibly be overheard,’ he glanced at the sleeping houses around them. ‘ I could give you,’ he added, ‘ some more excellent advice on other matters, but you would not thank me.’

‘ I am not sure of that,’ laughed Lewis, whose ill-humour was gone in a moment. ‘ I have to thank you for good advice before now, sir. Without your advice I should never have come here.’

‘I am glad to hear it. You get on all right with old Jerningham?’

Lewis grimaced : ‘Well enough—just now.’

‘Well, be careful, nothing is worth a quarrel—especially with one’s own interests. That is wisdom,’ said Lord Glarn. ‘Now, I wish you good-night, or good-morning rather,’ and he walked away.

Lewis met Annie in the hall when he was still holding the little handkerchief. It caught her eye at once.

‘Where did you get that?’ she asked.

‘From Lord Glarn,’ he answered. ‘I am going to give it to Dinah.’

Annie’s face fell. ‘Don’t,’ she said. ‘How can you be so foolish all about a wretched trifle! Give it to me.’ She took it from him. But she did not return it to Dinah. She locked it away when she reached her own room. Then she sat down and thought over the events of the night, smiling a faint, meditative smile.

The door opened softly, and Dinah came in with a candle in her hand. When she saw Annie, still in her ball dress, sitting on the edge of the bed, she exclaimed, ‘O child, I thought you would have been in bed by this time! Are you too tired?’

‘No,’ said Annie absently, ‘only thinking.’

‘Thinking! at this hour; it’s nearly six o’clock. Go to bed, Annie.’

‘What did you want?’ asked Annie without looking at her. Even her young face looked wearied and ghastly now. Dinah laid down the candle that was burning poorly in the morning light. She sat down beside Annie and took her hand.

‘I wanted to speak to you, Annie. I thought perhaps you would allow me to, because we were friends at school, and you have no mother, and I am older than you.’ Annie yawned. Dinah sat up straight and grave. ‘Lewis Campbell asked me to-night if you had told me anything about yourself and him. I told him that you had not. I have no wish, Annie, Heaven knows! to force your confidence, but he is so young, he cares so much for you—you ought not to behave as you have done to-night if——’

‘If what?’ said Annie.

‘If you have ever given him reason to suppose that you are fond of him,’ said Dinah.

‘There is *nothing* between Lewis and me,’ said Annie quietly. ‘I can’t prevent him making a fool of himself if he chooses. I never said anything to encourage him.’ She looked at Dinah with dilating eyes, steadily, as a cat stares in the half-light. ‘He’s no money. He’d much better fall in love with you, Dinah. You could afford to marry him.’

Dinah rose with one of her sweeping, powerful

movements and threw back the shutter. She stood for an instant overpowering Annie with the sudden dignity of her presence. 'Of course you know best,' she said; 'I shall never mention this to you again. I am sorry if I have alluded to what you did not wish to talk about. You must not think that I want to preach to you, Annie. I know the deceit—and jealousy—of my own heart too well to feel as if I could find fault with any one. You have never done anything half so mean as what I did just last night.' Annie looked at her curiously, but Dinah did not explain further. 'I only thought I might have helped you,' she said. 'Forgive me.' She bent and kissed Annie's soft, fair hair. 'Go to sleep now, Annie, or you will be fit for nothing all day.'

Annie did not go to sleep. She sat still when Dinah was gone, staring out at the lines of light that were creeping over the sea.

'A toad,' she said to herself, 'a toad. No wonder he looks as if he were dead. . . . And she had ten thousand pounds' worth of diamonds round her neck to-night!'

Slowly she unfastened her own trifling ornaments, looked at her wearied little face in the glass, then laughed as she turned away.

## CHAPTER XVI

JANE ANNE'S attitude to a baby was abject to a degree. She had, of course, all the good conventional ideas then prevalent about a mother's love ; but, in her heart of hearts (had she ever had the courage to examine the feeling), instead of the proud exultant sense of possession and passionate love for her child, there was a deep dejection. She hung above its cradle, wistful and overwhelmed with responsibility. She lay awake at night torturing herself lest she should make some little mistake about the care of it. It was, in fact, a terrible oppression to her ; and sometimes, when the servants had carried it off to the kitchen, if she went in and saw Phemie jigging it on a careless arm as she gossiped to a neighbour, or even ' the lass ' dandling it in a masterly fashion while she made the toast with the other hand, and the baby cried out and crowed, and stretched its toes to the fire in delight ; the poor mother of it would envy their powers from the bottom of her heart.

The child was named ' Thomasina. ' When Mr. Campbell had entered the date of her birth in



a neat small circle added to the family tree, he did not take much further notice of her, and Jane Anne was thus left unassisted to grapple with the first responsibility of her life.

The news of the child's birth was received in the Jerningham household with astonishment. Dinah alone said anything kind. She was thankful that Lewis had not overheard her father's exclamations when he first heard of it. She knew that some remarks Mr. Jerningham had uttered in his hearing about Jane Anne, once before, had made Lewis very angry. Her mother allowed Dinah to send some garments, of a finer quality than were likely to be got at Glarn, to the infant. 'Though I think it's very foolish of you to be in such a hurry,' she said. 'It may die off before the packet reaches her, and there's not likely to be another, so the things would just be wasted.' Dinah would have liked to have sent a cheque, but this she did not dare to propose. As for Lewis, he spoke very kindly about both his stepmother and the child. 'I'm glad it's a girl,' he said, 'then I can take care of her, and she will be a companion to my stepmother when I am away.'

But two or three weeks afterwards, as they sat at the breakfast table, when the post-bag came in and Mr. Jerningham had looked over its contents, he tossed a letter across to his wife.

‘It’s from Jane Anne,’ he said, ‘begging for money already, I suppose.’

Dinah bit her lip. Lewis bent across the table. ‘Did I hear you speak of my stepmother, sir?’ he asked.

‘Oh, Mr. Jerningham is a little out of sorts this morning,’ began his wife. Dinah sat silent.

Jerningham puffed, he looked up from the letter he was reading, fixing his round eyes on the young man. ‘You did,’ he said; ‘I spoke of my niece.’

‘Of my father’s wife,’ said Lewis. His blue eyes glittered suddenly.

‘And what the devil does it matter to me whose wife she is. I shall say what I please in my own house.’

Lewis pushed his chair away from the table and stood up. ‘Mr. Jerningham,’ he said, ‘the lady may be your niece, but you forget her relation to me. My father’s wife, I can assure you, will never beg for money from any one, and it is not in my hearing that it shall be said.’

‘D—n your insolence,’ said Jerningham. ‘What do you mean by speaking in this way to me? You’ll not stay another day in my house, I can tell you—nor in my employment. You can go this very minute, you young idiot! You’ve thrown away the only chance you’re ever likely to have of making money. Go home! Go and live on your father in affluence! With your step-

mother and her baby ; but when you 're in want again, don't come begging from me.'

Lewis stood during this speech with his hands in his pockets, listening with a slight smile. Then he bowed to Mr. Jerningham. 'I leave your house at once, then, sir.' Then turning to the women, 'I thank you for all your kindness, Mrs. Jerningham. Good-bye, and thank you. Good-bye, Dinah.'

'Can I help you ?' said Dinah, but Jerningham called out—

'Sit still, Dinah ; be quiet.' He turned again to Lewis : 'Be quick and get out of my house ; and before you go, I may tell you that Gunn proposed yesterday that you should be taken on as junior partner next year. Perhaps you may regret *now* what you 've thrown away.' He paused as if he expected Lewis to speak. 'Well,' he said, triumphantly, as the young man kept silence, 'do you care nothing for a chance like that ?'

Lewis threw back his graceful head.

'Not one brass farthing,' he said, and bowing again to Mrs. Jerningham, he left the room.

'Where are you going, Dinah ?' asked Mr. Jerningham, for Dinah had risen from the table.

'I am going to see Lewis off,' she replied. 'He is very careless. He will probably leave half his things behind him if I do not.' She looked her father straight in the face.

‘Con——’ he began, but Dinah did not waver for a moment, and he knew the storm would have no effect. ‘Go away then and hurry him off,’ he said, turning again to resume his breakfast.

She found Lewis already busy with his packing. He gave a quick exclamation of pleasure as she came in. ‘Believe me, Dinah, I’m sorry this has happened, before you at least; it was bound to happen some time.’

Dinah’s eyebrows were drawn together in a frown. She stood facing him, leaning on the back of a chair.

‘What are you going to do now?’ she asked abruptly.

‘Going away.’

‘And then?’

‘Going home.’

‘And then?’

He shook his head. ‘What I did before, I suppose—nothing—shoot rabbits!’

‘Did you know,’ said the girl, speaking slowly, ‘that the opportunity you have had here was,’ she paused, ‘a very exceptional one? My father very seldom will do anything like that. Most young men in your position would have kept it at any cost.’

‘I know that, Miss Jerningham.’

‘And you threw all that up because of Jane Anne?’

‘I did. Do you think I was wrong?’

‘I think you were very foolish,’ said Dinah steadily.

‘Shall I go back and beg your father’s pardon?’

‘Would you if I said you ought to?’

‘Yes, Miss Jerningham.’

Suddenly she held out her hand to him. ‘No, don’t do it.’ She began to pack up his things with the business-like speed and neatness that she inherited from Jerningham. Lewis protested, but she paid no heed to him. When it was finished, she turned to him. ‘Good-bye, then, Lewis. Will you give my love to Jane Anne? If she ever needs me, I will come to her. Good-bye.’

Lewis looked after her as she left the room. ‘There goes a brave woman,’ he thought; ‘she’d die for some man.’

But he took his departure very lightly, thinking as the coach rattled out of Ubster that he would see Annie again all the sooner. He had not expected to see her for months. He would not reach Glarn till late the next evening; and the next day, if the fates were kind, he would walk up her garden-path and see her again. The thought of the future did not weigh on him at all. He was young and strong—was he not?—self-reliant and proud; and, oh! there were a thousand things that he might do—if necessary. He would per-

suade Annie to come with him and go to make his fortune in America. He had heard a lot about that of late from some of the young men of his acquaintance. With Annie he could do anything. He would see her now in a day.

‘*But a night and half a day.*’ He watched the white road unrolling itself before him as the horses raced along, down one slope, and up another, till the flat fields and the low moors were left behind them, and there began to rise in the distance the outline of the great mountains, blue, and sharp, and terrible, against the sky.

‘Here, here, Lewis ; see, here she is !’ cried Jane Anne, trembling, her voice choking. She opened the door of the west room and led him in. ‘The lass’ was seated by the fire, holding the baby on her knee.

‘Oh, little sister !’ said Lewis, as the girl rose and put the child into his arms. He felt it strange enough, but for Jane Anne’s sake he tried to look pleased. The next moment a new thrill of affection ran through him, as its velvet-soft, tiny hand closed over his finger, and it chuckled, delighted, as all infants are, to feel a strong arm. It was only a few weeks old, but wonderfully alert looking, with a curl of dark hair on its head, and wide open eyes.

Jane Anne wept with joy when she saw Lewis

so pleased (as in a few days he really was) with the little creature. She enjoyed watching him play with it, although, of course, she trembled when he tossed it towards the roof, and did not approve of the terriers being allowed to skirmish about it so freely : while Lewis as yet scarcely realised that this new weight also was to hang upon him in the future.

## CHAPTER XVII

LONG ago, when children wrote in copy-books, it was the custom to head the page with a moral maxim ; and no doubt Lewis Campbell as a little boy had frequently copied out in round hand the undeniable truth, then a favourite 'copy line,' that 'Idleness is the mother of all the vices.' He was now about to put it to the proof. He begged his father to buy him a commission and let him go out to the war. He even murmured something about enlisting, but on that point Mr. Campbell was obdurate. What he wished was that his son should marry 'some amiable girl with money,' as he very artlessly said. That would enable him to live on at Glarn, and would preserve the meagre dignity of the family intact. As to Lewis going abroad, it was not to be thought of. Mr. Campbell regarded the idea with horror, and would stop any allusion to it by saying it was 'a last resource for the black sheep of a family,' and out of the question for Lewis as his heir.

'Heir to what, sir ?' said his son during one of these conversations, which were always fruitless



of good, and brought about nothing but angry feeling between them. 'Heir to what? This old bleak house, and the graveyard and two fields! I scarcely think a man need stay at home all his days in idleness for that.'

'Lewis,' said his father, assuming the stately manner that had so astonished Mr. Jerningham on his wedding day, 'I can have no further conversation with you upon this subject. You know what my wishes have been. You have refused to accommodate yourself to them. You have thrown up an excellent position. I do not blame you for that; you did right; you acted as I should have desired my son to act; but I beg that you will not speak of the inheritance of your fathers, however poor it may be, in this way. The bourgeois family you have lately lived amongst may account for that. I would not, for my part,' he continued grandly, 'exchange those poor acres and the grey stones in the churchyard there for all Mr. Jerningham's millions.'

'Very well, sir,' said the son; 'but you must remember that you have now a wife and a daughter, as well as me, to support off "those poor acres." "The grey stones" won't go very far with that!'

'You must marry.'

'Yes, sir, I mean to, as soon as I can.'

'What!' exclaimed Mr. Campbell, with a

touch of anxiety in his voice. 'I trust, Lewis, that your choice is such as I may approve.'

'I hope it is, sir. You know her already.'

'I—I—who?' said Mr. Campbell, hurriedly trying amongst their few female acquaintances to think of any 'amiable girl of good family' with a sufficient dowry. The choice was small. He paused, waiting for his son to speak.

'Annie Fraser, sir.'

Lewis knew beforehand how the announcement would be received, but he had been scarcely prepared for the utterly blank expression of dismay on his father's face. Mr. Campbell coughed, he swallowed quickly two or three times, he turned away his head and began to thrum on the arms of his chair; then, as Lewis still sat silent, he turned to him again, his voice broken strangely with emotion.

'My son, my son,' he said, 'this is a sore day for me!'

'But, father, I always thought that you liked Annie.'

'Poor lassie! I know no ill of her. I like her well enough, but she is a Catholic; and, oh! Lewis, think of the stock she came of.'

'But she is innocent of all that, sir; it is not right, it is not just to blame the children——'

Mr. Campbell cut him short. '*Do men gather figs from thorns, or from thistles grapes?* Poor

child ! I pray she may be kept from evil. I wish her well, but as a wife for my son I would rather——’ He paused, and the vanity of his life was forgotten for the moment as he added, ‘I would rather ten thousand times that he married a crofter’s daughter who could neither read nor write, so she came of decent people that feared the Lord.’

Lewis left him without another word. He went to see Annie that evening. He had seen her several times before, and she had played with him and coaxed him, and been cold to him by turns. She would silence his most tender speeches by saying candidly, ‘But you know, Loo, that is all very well, only at present, even if I were married to you—’ here Lewis would open his mouth to speak, but before he could utter a word—‘married to you *openly*, it would be impossible for us to live together just now. I told you I couldn’t bear to be poor. Wait till you have a house of your own.’

‘What chance have I of that just now?’

‘Well, till you have, I can assure you, *I’m* not going to live at Glarn with your stepmother, as I told you before.’

And so the fruitless argument would end in vows of love from Lewis and inscrutable silence from Annie. That evening he found her out at church. She had of late been unusually devout. She came in with shining eyes, with her service

book held to her heart. 'Lord Glarn was in church, uncle,' she said, having scarcely taken notice of Lewis at all. 'I think in time he will be a good Catholic.'

'Since when have you become so devout, Annie?' asked Lewis mockingly.

'For about a fortnight,' Annie replied with tranquillity. 'It is never too late to mend.'

So time went on, the winter turned to spring, April to May, and matters seemed utterly at a standstill.

One evening, late it was, in the twilight, Lewis had been fishing in one of the inland lochs, and was on his way home, when he met Lord Glarn, accompanied by two men, with whom he was already slightly acquainted. They too had been fishing, and were on their way back to the Lodge.

'Back again, Campbell,' called out Lord Glarn, 'like——'

'A bad shilling. Yes,' said Lewis quickly.

'Ah, quarrelled with Jerningham, I suppose?'

'Yes.'

'Well, it's a pity. In your place I'd have let him bully me to any extent.'

Lewis smiled, showing a row of teeth. 'I do not think you would have, my lord!'

'Well, well, who knows? What are you doing here—going home? Oh, come back to the Lodge with us; we want a hand at cards,' he said.

Lewis turned with them gladly. He was thankful to escape from his own company for an hour.

The other two men walked ahead. One of them, Vere by name, was the Marquis's cousin, and failing an heir, would be his successor—a thin, long-faced man, with the slightly battered look of one whose fortune has always been in expectation.

‘I’ve been losing a deuced lot of money,’ said Glarn to Lewis, nodding at Vere. ‘During these wet days we’d nothing to do but play. That’s my misfortune, you know, when I once begin I can’t leave off.’

‘So I have heard,’ said Lewis, for this failing was well known. As a younger man it had led the Marquis into difficulties, a quarrel with his father, till the thing had been patched up by a rich marriage.

Report said the Marchioness was at that time dangerously ill. Annie had told Lewis they had offered masses for her recovery. He could not but wonder, as he now walked beside the man, what his feelings were, and how he could have left his wife if it were true that her illness was likely to prove fatal. Perhaps their thoughts had been simultaneous; for Lord Glarn continued, ‘It’s the only thing that will drive other things out of your head—if you play deep enough.’

‘I’d be glad to do *that*,’ said Lewis. ‘I’ve had enough of my own thoughts to-day.’

‘ Something wrong ?’

‘ Everything,’ said Lewis.

Lord Glarn laughed. ‘ Well, that ’s something of my own case. We ’ll do our best to forget just now.’

‘ There won’t be much sport in playing with me,’ said Lewis ; ‘ I have nothing to lose.’

‘ You have what I would give a great deal to possess,’ said Glarn.

Something in his tone made Lewis turn sharply, but they walked in the shadow of the wood, and he saw nothing.

‘ What do you mean ?’ he asked.

‘ Naboth’s vineyard,’ said the other, with a laugh.

## CHAPTER XVIII

THE Lodge stood alone in the deep woods of Glarn. It was built on a piece of rising ground at one end of the loch, and no other habitation was anywhere within sight.

The loch of Glarn was small, and remotely lonely. Its distinctive characteristic—the only respect in which it differed from a score of similar lochs hidden away amongst the woods and hills of the district—was that at one end, the end where the Lodge was built, there was a beach of white sand, like the sand of the sea, only so much whiter, that when the sun struck on it where it was drifted and piled up high about the roots of the old trees, it shone like driven snow.

As they climbed the slight ascent to the Lodge, Lord Glarn turned and glanced behind him. ‘Ah!’ he cried, ‘look at that!’ He stopped short, leaning on the gate, and looked down. The moon had just risen, and through faint wreaths of mist that crept along the edge of the loch the sand shone as if it had been heaps of seed pearl.

‘Very fine,’ said Vere languidly.

Lord Glarn looked and looked, as if he saw something wonderful. 'Do you remember Aarons, Campbell?' he asked at length, 'that Jewish fellow who used to go about a good deal with my father? A fat man, always jesting. Well, I remember some one once asked him—Heaven knows why!—what he thought heaven would be like. And he considered the point for a few minutes, and then said, "*To die drunk, and wake on the beach at Glarn.*"'

'To die drunk by all means,' laughed Vere. 'But Aarons was lucky if he ever woke in any place half as cool as the beach of Glarn.'

'It's damp here with the mist rising. Come in, Campbell,' said the Marquis, turning away.

They sat playing in the little hall that served for sitting-room, the candles flaring against the uncurtained windows. As a matter of course, Lewis staked every penny he was worth at the moment. He was always perfectly reckless about money; and he had, alas! too often done so before. Things righted themselves: he had never yet owed more than somehow or other he was able to pay: such money as he had was his own after all, and he could do with it what he chose . . . and so on—the arguments with which from the beginning the gambler has excused himself. Tonight he was unhappy, and he wanted excitement to stir his blood and make him forget. But at



last he lost too much. He pulled himself up short. 'That 's my last halfpenny,' he said, pushing the slip of paper to which he had signed his name across the table.

'Oh, go on, you 'll win the next time,' said Vere at his elbow.

'I can't,' said Lewis, fixing his frank eyes on him. 'Of course, I can give you promises, but I 'd have nothing to pay them with, and I won't risk that.'

'Right, Campbell—quite right,' said Lord Glarn slowly, as he cut the cards. Then he raised his eyes : his pale face was quite unmoved, but there shone in his glance as Lewis met it a spirit awakened, mocking—at himself.

'I 'm sorry to spoil sport,' said Lewis ; 'go on without me—I wish I could.'

Vere laughed with a sneer under his smile. He too had no money, and his promises were blank paper, but he went on giving them. Glarn looked once more at Lewis. 'Try again, Campbell,' he urged ; 'I 'll play you for Naboth's vineyard. I 'll——' He paused, and drew his breath like a sob, as was his way when he got excited. 'I 'll lay you ten thousand pounds against the house and lands of Glarn—and that 's three times its value any day.'

He silently cut the cards, and laid them before him, and there crossed his face, as a shadow crosses water, a sudden shiver of excitement.

‘Lands of Glarn ! Two fields,’ said Vere, watching Lewis.

‘Done,’ said Lewis. He gave a single thought to his father’s words about ‘his inheritance,’ but it was not his way to hesitate. He would not think twice. Had not Annie said to him, ‘You’re poor, and so I can’t marry you’ ? What did anything else matter then ?

The clock above them struck a jarring note. Out of doors, in the still highland night there was not a sound. They played on.

Half an hour later Vere called out, ‘By —— ! Naboth’s vineyard’s yours, my lord !’

Lewis pressed his hand hard on the table. He did not speak.

Lord Glarn turned to him with a smile. ‘So it is ! We’ll settle this matter afterwards, Campbell. I’ll give you a decent price for it, of course.’

‘It’s yours, sir, if ever it is mine. You’ll owe me nothing,’ said Lewis, rising to his feet.

‘Oh, chut !’ said Lord Glarn, ‘that’s all nonsense. We’ll settle about that later on. It’s time we went to bed now if we don’t want to see the broad daylight. Come along, Vere. You’d best take an hour or two of sleep before you go, Campbell. Go home after breakfast.’ His passing eagerness had disappeared already.

‘Oh, I shall go now ; it’s not worth while going to bed at this hour,’ said Lewis.

The candles were guttering in their sockets, the windows growing grey. Lewis refused to wait longer ; Lord Glarn came with him to the door, calling out after him, ' I 'll come over and settle that affair with you to-morrow.'

He turned back into the house with the other men, and Lewis made his way stumblingly down the steep, narrow path that led from the door.

He went at first slowly, and staggered like a drunken man. When he got down to the side of the loch, he sat down on the stump of a fallen tree, and looked about him, drinking in deep mouthfuls of the morning air, cold and fresh after the heated atmosphere of the lighted room.

It was now about four o'clock in the morning, and as he sat there the indescribable loveliness of the scene pierced even his stupefied brain.

The air was full of the scent of young leaves and the pungent sweetness of the bog myrtle that grew in the marshes by the shore. There was no wind, no sign of motion anywhere. High and clear like angels, the birds sang on unseen, all around him, in the trees and bushes ; and where the newly risen sun shone down on the loch, the white beach was scarcely earthly in its beauty, in spite of the simple light of morning. Anything—angel or spirit, vision good or bad—might have taken shape and walked towards him over that white sand, that might have been heaps of

seed pearl driven up to the dark edges of the wood.

There, for a while, the young man sat stupefied, slowly revolving in his brain his own incredible folly. Every time that he looked up, it seemed, in the growing daylight, more impossible. How should he meet his father again with this upon his conscience? He could not tell him. It would break his heart. He was good for nothing, and the only chance that remained to him was to go away. If he were away, the thing might never reach his father's ears at all. He might die first—who knows—and so the debt would never be his to pay. At any rate, his father need know nothing of it. Annie? And then, he knew not why, there came suddenly before him—not Annie with her alluring glances, not Annie who made his heart burn, and who (as she thought) could wind him round her finger like a thread of silk—but a vision of Dinah Jerningham with her straight look meeting his, her grey, steady eyes, her shield-like face.

'She would despise me for ever if she knew,' he said. 'Oh, Annie, I cannot act this folly any longer. You shall come with me, or we'll part for ever.' He rose, and walked out into the morning, holding himself erect, a sudden purpose in his eyes.

## CHAPTER XIX

THE lark was singing in his cage when Lewis walked up the little garden of the priest's house : a sure sign that Annie was not in. —

‘It's you, Lewis,’ said Father Fraser, turning in his chair as Lewis entered. The sight of the bent figure, and the feeble grasp of the flaccid hand, nearly made the young man's resolution falter. Lewis had observed an alteration in Father Fraser's appearance as soon as he had come home, but to-day the change was more marked, for the yellow face had a drawn look of pain that was new, and made him look many years older.

‘I've come to-day to bid you good-bye, sir.’

‘Are you going back to Ubster, then, my boy?’

‘No, Father, not to Ubster—much further. I'm going to America. I have settled it at last with my father. He was very unwilling at first, but—but, in fact, sir, I have been very foolish. I've been playing too high, and got into difficulties, and so I suppose he thinks that it is as well I should be out of harm's way for a bit, and he has given his consent, so I sail next week.’

The old man sat silent, then he said, 'You breathe hard, Lewis ; you have something more to say ; you are excited. What is it, my son ?' He turned his blind face, saying, 'Is it Annie ?'

'Yes, oh yes, sir, I——' began Lewis. It was all that he could do to repress the words that were on his lips, and add, 'Would you allow Annie to come with me, sir ?' His hand trembled, he held his breath. Was it possible that, after all, this deception was going to come to a quiet end ? But Father Fraser shook his head.

'No, no, Lewis ; it cannot be. I like you well, but I shall never give my consent to that. You do not know her. She would not do it.'

'But if I had her consent——'

'No, no ; she is a Catholic, Lewis, and your father would never allow that, even did her own faith permit it. Have you asked him ?'

'I have said something about it,' Lewis admitted unwillingly.

'And what did he say ?'

Lewis was silent. The old man drew a long sigh, a quick flush ran across his face. 'I know—I know—you would not grieve me by repeating it. He was right too. I, in his place, would have done the same.' He paused, and his voice sank. Then after a minute, Lewis, through the bubbling notes of the little bird's song, heard a

word or two, 'Born in iniquity—my brother's child.'

'He was . . . also a priest, sir,' said Lewis.

'Yes,' said Father Fraser, with a flash of passion that Lewis had never seen in him before. 'He was. I was the eldest. I was no priest then, Lewis. I—but—— Ah! it is long, long ago.' The sudden energy ended in a sob. He drew his hand away and covered his eyes.

Lewis was ashamed to witness it. He rose softly and took up his cap to go. He would not say good-bye again. As he closed the door, the old man was still sobbing childish sobs, and Lewis heard between them one word, 'Annie! Annie!'

He walked quickly away. Annie, he knew, was in the little church. He would go and speak to her there. The door was ajar. Annie alone, in the cool silence, sat with her lap full of paper roses, before the statue of the Virgin, making a new wreath.

'Annie,' he called her name gently. He came up to her bareheaded, with the inherited respect for a place of worship, of which Annie showed no trace. She looked up and nodded and laughed.

'Come and sit here,' she said; then, looking at his face, 'What is the matter with you, Loo?' she asked. 'Your face is all white and hard. What's wrong?—Oh, bother those odious roses, they're all falling to bits. There, Madam (ad-

dressing the figure), no one will look in that corner ; the dirty rose can go there.'

' Shall I tell you why I came—here ? ' He glanced around him.

' Yes, why not ? Oh ! well, never mind, it 's as good a place as any other,' she said.

So, sitting down on the little bench opposite to her, he, lowering his voice, told her everything.

Annie did not put in a single word till he had finished ; then she said, ' So you haven't even got Glarn left now, Loo.'

' Not even that—if it should ever be mine.'

' Does your father know ? '

' No, no, Annie. Heaven forbid ! He shall never know if I can keep it from him.'

' Then you mean that it would be only after his death '—Lewis winced at the coolness with which she spoke—' that you would sell it to Lord Glarn ? '

' I mean that ; only, I would not sell it. It would be his anyhow. I told you so.'

' I thought you said he offered to buy it.'

' Of course he did. He is an honourable man'—Lewis did not look at Annie as he spoke. Her eyelids had flickered for an instant—' but I refused. I was fool enough to play on that condition. He owes me nothing. If the house is ever mine, it 's his next day.'

' And what did you tell your father then ? '

' I told him the truth—so far as I could. I told



him I had played rather deep—I'd pay up all I could—the rest I would pay in time. I will. I asked him to let me go to America, and he has given his consent. Oh! Annie,' he leant forward, pushing the paper flowers aside, and took her hand in his, 'I shall never again, I hope, have to speak only part of the truth. I shall end this now. I'll act a lie no longer. Come with me, Annie. My father will be angry, and your uncle will be grieved. I am sorry for them both, but I can't do anything else. Come with me.'

'Come with you, Loo! What do you mean? When?'

'Next week—on Tuesday. Are you not my wife, Annie?'

'Hush! hush! hush!' She rattled the leaves loudly in her lap, and glanced over her shoulder, as if afraid that any one should hear.

'I should like all the world to hear!'

'Remember your promise, Lewis!'

Lewis stood up. 'Annie, I am going. Before I go you will either bid me good-bye—for ever perhaps—for years at any rate—or else you will give me your word to come with me.' Annie was silent. 'Choose,' he said. She looked up, and saw no yielding in his face. She laid her small, clinging hand upon his arm.

'I would come with you, Loo, but how would it ever be managed? Think of what your father

would say—he would never consent—neither would uncle—besides, we should need to be married twice over ; first in your church, and then in mine, for I'm a Catholic.'

Lewis stamped his heel upon the pavement till it rang. '*Married*—we *are* married, Annie, as fast as two churches can marry us, if you sign that paper I gave you once. Have you got it still?'

Annie hung her head and made no answer.

'You said that you would do it,' he went on.

'Perhaps,' Annie interpolated.

'Well, I have done it ; you have as good as done it—you said you would. I want no better marriage. Sign that just now, and you are as much my wife as if you had been married by all the clergymen and priests in Scotland. I know enough of law for that. Do you think that I would act a lie over again even to please you?'

'But *I* haven't signed it,' said Annie.

'You will ; you said that you would.'

'Now, Loo, keep quiet. Well, even supposing I did, think how unpleasant it would be to go to your father and say, "I have been married some time ago." Think of the row. Think of what people would say !'

'What do I care for what people would say?'

'I care,' said Annie succinctly.

'Come with me, then, without telling any one ; they'll know soon enough when we're gone.'

‘How could I come without every one knowing?’

Lewis considered. ‘Well, Annie, you could. I don’t like it, but if you will have it so, you can. I’ll start a day before they think I’m really going. You can meet me somewhere along the shore. We’ll drive in the dark, and not a soul will know you on the road, and we’ll be in Ubster the next day before the ship sails—easy to do it.’

‘How can I go miles along the shore in the dark?’

‘Oh, I’ll come for you. We can go into the cave at Loom—no one ever goes there—and wait till it’s dark, for an hour or two, and the horses can meet us on the road. The man won’t say a word if I pay him well.’

Annie sat fingering the flowers. She looked up suddenly. ‘How is the Marchioness?’ she asked.

Lewis started. ‘Great Heavens, Annie! will you drive me distracted? Can you not be serious for one moment of your life when both our future depends upon it?’

‘I see nothing flippant in asking for a person who is seriously ill at any time; but if I’ve made you angry, I’m sorry. I must go back to uncle now. I’ll think over what you said.’

‘Forgive me, Annie; I am very rude—but you seemed to forget how much this thing meant for both of us. I don’t know how the Marchioness is

to-day. She was better yesterday when I saw Lord Glarn. He seemed in good spirits about her.'

'I must go,' said Annie. She gathered up the remains of the flowers and moved to the door, but Lewis stepped in front of her.

'Pardon, Annie, but I must have your decision now.'

'Oh, nonsense, Loo, let me pass. Uncle will be wearying for me.'

She laid her hand on the door, which was ajar. He closed it and stood against it, facing her, his arms folded. 'I will not leave this until you answer me, Annie.'

'To-morrow,' began the girl.

'No, just now, this very minute. It's all right about your choice, Annie. I don't wish to force you into anything, only you must answer me now; there is no time, and this is no matter for shillyshallying about.'

Annie stood silent, crackling the paper leaves between her fingers.

He watched her for a moment, and then bent down. 'You won't; very well. "*Since there's no hope, come let us kiss and part.*" Good-bye, Annie.'

But as his arm went round her, Annie caught hold of the front of his coat with one of her child-like movements, and clinging to it, sobbed out—

'I'll come, Loo—I'll come.'

## CHAPTER XX

THE cave of Loom was accessible only when the tide was low. At high water the mouth of the outer cave was closed. When Lewis swung himself over the rocks that screened the opening, it was then about five o'clock in the afternoon. Annie was not there. He sat down and waited for a few minutes, then a figure emerged from the shadows at his side. 'Was I not brave?' she said; 'I really went a little way in by myself. There was a man shooting gulls along there, and I was afraid that he might recognise me.'

'Oh, no fear! No one will pass this way to-night; at least, no one will come into the cave. Come along, Annie; there's more light further in.'

Annie followed him up the strait, dark entrance into the wider passage beyond. Then she stopped short. 'Now,' she said, 'that's what I cannot do—to crawl through that little hole in the rock, Loo. I once went in when I was a child, and it was horrible.'

'Oh! nonsense. We can't stay here for two

hours—any one might come in. Let me go first. If I get through, you needn't crawl ; it's not so low as you think ; it's light enough on the other side.'

He made his way on his hands and knees, through the little opening, into the inner chamber—a small recess, which was by no means quite dark, for light filtered down from a crack in the rocks above and showed the white sides of limestone and the floor of sand. He called out to her cheerfully, and Annie wriggled herself through the opening with less difficulty than he had done, exclaiming with pleasure when she saw the light. She wore a long cloak with a hood that concealed her face. Her feet were bare.

'See,' she said, 'I came with bare feet, so that if any one saw me in the distance they might think I was one of the girls gone to gather bait. I think I may put on my shoes and stockings now ; it will be dark when we come out.'

'Oh yes ; no one will recognise you then.'

'Are you sure everything will be all right, Loo?'

'Yes, yes. The man with the horses will meet us at the cross-road on the moor by ten o'clock. We can wait here till then. They think I've gone over to Edderty. They won't expect me home early. Come, and let me put on your stockings, Annie.'

He knelt down and took the little foot in his hand, and began to tie her shoe-strings.

Annie shivered. 'Oh, I don't like this, Loo. My courage is going away. I wish I could have done it at once.'

'Well, it's only an hour or two. There! Now the other foot!'

'How loud the water sounds out there!' said Annie.

'Yes, it will be nearly up to the mouth of the cave now; the tide was running like a mill-race when I came up. No one can come in now.'

Annie said she was cold, so he took off his coat and wrapped it round her feet, and sat looking up at the crack of light in the roof that had shifted now, and was sending wavering rays down upon the stones.

They were talking about what they should do in Ubster when they got there next morning. Annie had arranged to have some small luggage sent on two days beforehand.

'I think I will go and see Dinah Jerningham,' she said, laughing.

'No; don't do that, Annie,' said Lewis quickly. She looked up, surprised at his tone.

'Why not? I'll tell her I'm staying with the sisters at the convent there. She won't know I'm not.'

Lewis frowned in silence.

‘ You will only have half a day to spend there, Annie ; the less you ’re seen the better. We can go on board the vessel in the evening ; besides, you ’ll have to write and tell your uncle. You said you would before we sailed.’

‘ Oh yes, yes, yes,’ said Annie impatiently.

‘ And you are really doing all this for me,’ said Lewis. ‘ Oh, Annie, I pray you may never regret it.’

‘ Look, look, the sun is setting ; that ray of light is turning red,’ she called, pointing upwards.

But at that Lewis suddenly stopped speaking, then threw back his head to listen ; at the same moment, with shower of spray and foam, a volume of water broke from the shadow at the end of the cavern, and rushed in a shallow wave almost to where they sat.

There was a moment’s silence, then came the sound of the water sucking, sucking backwards, and with a huge, awful noise the wave broke against the rock and sobbed into the cave, running further up this time, soaking Annie where she sat.

She caught at Lewis’s arm as he knelt before her, and at the instant the red light shifted and fell upon his face. When she saw it, Annie called out in a thin, horrible voice of fear, ‘ Oh, Lewis, what is it ? ’

For answer he jumped to his feet, and lifting



her up bodily, scrambled over the stones to the back of the cave.

‘There,’ he said, and the natural sound of his voice reassured her, ‘you won’t get wet there, I think. We must wait until the tide goes out again, Annie.’

He strained his eyes in the gloom : then he left her and crawled along the side, stopped, and struck a light. It shone one moment before the match went out. The hole that gave entrance to the outer cave was under the level of the water now. Annie saw it too.

‘I thought the tide never rose so high,’ she said.

‘Sometimes,’ he answered ; then, speaking quickly to change her thoughts, ‘Your feet are all wet, Annie ; let me wrap my coat about your knees. That’s better. Now lean against my shoulder, sweet, and have patience for half an hour.’

Annie hid her face in silence. The light had disappeared now, there was only a glimmer from the long crack in the roof. The bursting sound of the waves had been succeeded by the quiet, regular lifting and falling of the water. Far away on the rocks that guarded the outer cave they could hear the rush of the incoming tide—and the noise of it was like a trampling army. Lewis whistled softly to himself. He chucked shells and

pebbles into the water with his free hand ; the other arm was round the girl.

‘ Sit a bit higher up, Annie ; I don’t want you to get wet again,’ he said cheerily, breaking off his whistling.

‘ I can’t,’ said Annie, raising her head, ‘ my shoulder is jammed against the rock already.’

She felt Lewis tighten his hold of her, to raise her up a little, then below his breath he muttered, ‘ Great God !’

‘ What’s the matter, Loo ?’ asked Annie in a whisper.

He gathered her up against his breast, holding her as if she had been a child.

‘ Oh, what is it ?’ she sobbed again.

He bent his face over hers.

‘ *It’s a spring tide to-night, Annie.*’

‘ Will the water . . . come right up here ?’ she asked.

‘ Yes.’

‘ When, Loo ?’

‘ In about a quarter of an hour if it goes on like this.’

‘ Shall we be drowned then ?’

Lewis nodded. Then he said quietly, ‘ You can climb up on my shoulder, Annie, then you won’t get wet for a while.’

Annie threw herself back on his arm and stared into his face, which she could now scarcely distin-

guish in the gloom. Then she drew herself up and shrieked, her voice ringing shrill through the rocks. She clung with her arms about his neck : Lewis tried to soothe her in vain.

‘ Oh, Lewis ! ’ she cried ; ‘ I *cannot* die like this ! How can I ? How can I be choked and drowned by inches in this horrible dark ? Oh, help ! help ! help ! ’

Her voice rang wildly against the walls of rock—repeated in anguished echoes up and around them.

The water surged and gurgled higher, and as it washed about her knees she shrieked again.

Lewis tore her arms from his neck. He clambered on to the highest point he could reach, pulling her up after him.

‘ Now, ’ he said, holding her up to his heart, ‘ be quiet, Annie. Don’t drive yourself and me mad with folly like this. If the water rises much farther, you know there is no help for it. ’

Annie was silent for a moment, her face buried on his shoulder, then she said, ‘ Are you afraid, Loo ? ’

‘ I ? no ! ’ said Lewis, with a little laugh.

She heard his voice as usual, felt the beating of his heart, regular and strong : the arm that held her did not tremble.

‘ If it were anything else—— ’ she went on. ‘ But to be choked like rats in a hole, here, in this

fearful dark. I saw a drowned man once at school, Loo—years ago. I've never forgotten it. His face was all stiff and dreadful, and his fingers blue and crooked. Ah !'

A wave reached them and lapped against his knee.

'Raise yourself, Annie ; climb on my shoulder.'

But she called in his ear, 'No, no, no, I shall be left here last then, to choke and struggle by myself in the dark. Don't let me be left, Loo !—promise.'

'Very well ; if you wish.'

'Will you take hold of me and hold me down till I remember nothing more ?'

'Yes, my love, I will.'

He put out his hand in the darkness to feel how the water had risen. The stone just below was covered now.

Both were silent, and Annie's sobs grew less, when suddenly and again and again she shrieked, this time with a frenzy of horror, shivering and beating with her hands.

'Ah ! ah ! ah ! *it's something crawling on my neck.* Oh ! Loo—something wet and horrible.'

Lewis felt at her throat with his fingers and threw the little crab away. As it clung to his hand, he smiled to himself even then at the quivering agony of Annie's disgust. 'Oh ! kill me, kill me now, Loo,' she cried. 'Do not let those

awful things come up and crawl over me ! Oh, kill me with your warm hands !'

'Be quiet,' he said sharply. 'Did I not promise that I would when there was no more hope ?'

Annie was silent for the next few minutes. The water kept rising, and she shuddered as it chilled her feet.

'Do you believe in God, Loo ?'

'Yes, Annie.'

'I don't,' she said. 'The kind of shadow of God that we pray to, goes away at times like this. It is all emptiness. There is none. If you think there is, why don't you pray ?'

'I have prayed.'

'I didn't hear you.'

'I did not speak aloud.'

Annie raised her voice, '*Oh, God ! God ! God !*' she screamed, '*come, if you are there ! Hear, Help ! Help ! I cannot die like this !*' The thin voice ran along the roof, and a wave burst at their feet, rushing up upon them foaming and cold. The spray choked her, the water drenched her to the skin.

Lewis caught the little hands in his. 'Now, my sweet, are you ready ? You're not going to be afraid, my lamb ! It won't hurt much ; it will be all over in a minute, and I won't let you go till the end. Be quiet, Annie ; be brave, be brave. Kiss me again, and be brave, little woman.'

‘When?’ Annie whispered, shivering.

‘After the next wave,’ he said.

They heard the thundering rush of the waves in the outer cave, then the whirling, sucking noise as the volume of water forced itself through the narrow mouth of the rock. Annie hid her face . . . but this time the water only washed about their knees. Then, for the first time, she felt Lewis draw his breath hard; his heart beat furiously. They spoke not a word, till the seconds, drawn out to indescribable length, had passed, and another wave came surging up the rocks.

This time it welled slowly up about their feet, and drew back again without a sound.

‘The tide has turned, Annie.’

She did not answer, but relaxed her clasp about his neck, and sank from him with a long sigh.

## CHAPTER XXI

It was near midnight when they came out of the shadow at the mouth of the cave, and the moon shone faintly in a clear sky. The tide, withdrawing every moment, was murmuring now in long shoals on the sands. The night wind, pure and cold, blew gently from the sea.

Annie staggered up the bit of rocky ground and threw herself gasping on the grass.

‘Oh, the air!’ she called. ‘The blessed sky! The moon, Loo! See, see—the birds! It’s wide, and free, and dry land again!’ She spread out her hands upon the turf, plucking at the weeds and the small sea-pinks growing there, and she laughed wildly, looking in his face with her glittering eyes.

‘Come,’ said Lewis sternly, ‘you must not lie there in the cold. You are wet through; you are ill; you do not know what you say.’ Annie did not heed him. He stooped and lifted her up. ‘Come, my love, we must go on. We cannot stay here.’

Again Annie turned up her face. ‘I am not

your love,' she called, her voice ringing clear as silver in the solitary night. 'I am not your love. I love nothing but life—and this earth—and the wide sky. Oh! the sun will rise to-morrow, rise and be daylight again, and I shall be alive. *Alive.* Oh! I want nothing more.'

She suffered Lewis to draw her arm through his and lead her on, seeming indifferent to the way they went. Her wet clothes clung about her, hampering her walk. Her head was bare, and her hair fell disordered on her neck. Once she stopped to wring the water from her skirts, and looked at him, as if she scarcely knew who spoke to her.

So they went on through the quiet, silver night, going always inland, till they reached the road that led across the moor. Where the two roads met, Lewis stood and looked about him, but there was no figure in sight, no sound of hoofs to be heard. Margaret's cottage rose dark and solitary about half a mile away.

'Can you get as far as that, Annie?' he asked.

'Come, come home,' said Annie, pulling at his sleeve.

'We cannot go home, my child,' he said, speaking to her as if she had been a little girl; 'you are wet through. You cannot walk farther. Let me carry you.' She suffered him to lift her up, and he carried her slowly up to the cottage door.



He knocked long before the old woman made any answer. Then she called out fearfully to know who was there, flinging open the crazy wooden door with a cry of surprise at the sound of his voice.

He gave some hurried explanation, and half lifted Annie across the threshold ; but she drew back, clinging to his arm. ' Oh, no ! ' she cried, ' not in there. Let us stay outside—it is wide. Do not let us go in to the dark again ! '

Margaret bent to the ashes on the floor and blew upon the smouldering sticks till the flame leapt up and blazed, filling the cabin with dancing light.

' See, Annie, it is dry and warm,' said Lewis, and Annie let him lead her in.

The old woman brought out some dry things of her own : she took off the girl's soaking clothes, gave her a warm drink, and laid her down in the ' box ' bed, heaping the coarse woollen coverings over her and muttering endearing Gaelic names. Annie's eyes were half closed at first, and she let them attend to her without a word of protest, only she shivered as her delicate skin touched the rough blankets.

' Did you hear a man passing with two horses some time since ? ' Lewis asked the old woman, and at the question Annie's eyelids quivered. Margaret, whatever she suspected, had the art of simplicity. She told him with elaborate detail

how the horses had waited nigh on two hours and a half. She had given the man a light for his pipe, but he was a Lowlander, and without a word of the Gaelic.

Then spreading food and drink on her low table, she pressed Lewis to eat, and finally, having piled some fresh peats on the fire, she crouched herself down like a dog on a heap of bracken in the corner. Lewis was overcome by exhaustion, the warmth made him drowsy after having been chilled through : he sank back where he sat by the fire, and in a few minutes he slept profoundly. But Annie did not close her eyes.

The warmth and silence had quieted her. She stretched her limbs, moved her head to a more comfortable position, and pushing the wet hair up upon the pillow, and lying flat upon her back, she gradually grew calm again.

Within the hut the red light flickered noiselessly. Annie knew every object in the miserable room, she had so often been there before, but now her eyes wandered lovingly over it all. The heart of the fire that glowed upon the earthen floor ; for there was no fireplace, and only two stones held the brands together, the smoke rising up to a hole in the roof that served as chimney. The blackened wooden dresser with two plates and a china cup (the cup had a wreath of rosebuds at its edge she knew ; many a time she had drunk

from it as a child). The copper jug that stood behind the door : she noted everything—for did not all these things belong to human existence ? This was life—under what conditions, for the moment, she did not care. Then the fire died down. She heard the starlings twitter in the wall, and her heart laughed. She looked at Lewis, marvelling that he could sleep : she did not wish for anything at all, not for rest or slumber, but only just to know for certain that she was alive in the cheerful world again.

The smoke ceased to rise as the fire grew low, so that through the hole in the roof she saw a patch of sky in which the stars were marching overhead. There in the quietness of night the girl's heart lay open like a book.

A sleepless night in deep stillness, when no clock strikes the hour, is long enough to lay out the plan of a lifetime—to reveal the present, review the past, or forecast the future.

Ah ! there comes to all of us, unaware, ' like a thief in the night,' a day of judgment, an hour when the ways part to right and left, up or down ; and as Annie lay there, she made her choice. What she desired in life, what henceforward she would strive to get, was what, after all, she had always valued most. In the shock of her terror, against that blackness of darkness that a few hours ago had threatened to swallow her up, out of the

living world into the pit as it seemed—there blazed up by contrast, radiant, all the possibilities of life. Yes, even for her, if she took hold of it, money and rank, ‘houses and lands,’ gaieties, luxuries, the admiration that should satisfy her vain desires, the thousand and one enrichments that make existence brilliant. That no lure might be wanting, the Tempter as he leaned over the girl that night, stooped to show her fine clothes, dainty living, jewels.

And once, before he triumphed, her good angel spoke—but the voice was low—telling her of a life led with the man she had promised to love, the man she did love. A life that could probably never be anything but quiet and poor, with love and honour and faith : with a round of simple duties to husband and children : with peace at heart . . . but the argument was faint, and the soul that heard it turned away.

A stick dropped from the hearth, sending a blaze for a moment over the room, and Lewis with a start awoke, and lifted his head to listen, for through the morning stillness came the sound of horses’ hoofs. Annie too raised herself on her elbow, and their eyes met. She held her finger to her lips ; steps came across the grass ; then the crazy door was shaken as some one rattled on it with a riding whip.

Lewis sprang to his feet, motioning to the old

woman not to undo the door. She called out to know who was there, and the reply came low but distinct—

‘The Marquis of Glarn.’

Lewis pushed her aside. He opened the door and stepped out into the grey morning light.

A carriage, with two men beside it, was drawn up on the road at some distance. Lord Glarn stood alone upon the threshold. He was very pale, yet he smiled as he spoke—the rare, sweet smile that had fascinated Lewis from his boyhood.

‘Is Miss Fraser in there?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ said Lewis, standing in the doorway—he had drawn the door close behind him—‘she is. May I ask what you want with her?’

‘I wish to speak a few words with her if I may.’

‘On what subject?’

‘That concerns her and me,’ said Lord Glarn. Then, changing his tone, he looked at the young man very kindly: ‘Good Lord, Campbell! Are you such a fool as to wish to raise a scandal over the whole countryside about the girl you love? Yes, yes; I know all about it. She was coming with you to marry you—of course, of course. Bad enough as it is. But let her go back to her uncle now—tell a few firm lies, and pay the man who was to have driven you to hold his tongue—and the whole matter will be hushed up.’

‘But I have no wish, sir, to “hush the matter

up." Annie Fraser is mine ; I told you so before. She shall not go home. She has given her word to come with me, and nothing but death or her own desire shall part us now.'

Glarn smiled again at the hot words. 'That being the case,' he said, 'you can have no objection to my hearing Miss Fraser's decision from her own lips. I must take back the message to her uncle. He is an old man, and such a grief will strike him very hard. He fears now that she has been drowned, for the last thing he heard of her was from a man who saw you together at Loom yesterday evening—he was shooting gulls on the shore.'

'And you?' demanded Lewis.

'Oh, I happened to be at Edderty at the time, and I heard the news. I met the man returning with your horses, and from what he told me I concluded——'

'It was not my wish to make any secret of the matter,' said Lewis.

'No ; it is difficult to keep anything a secret, not always wise,' said the Marquis. He stood tapping the point of his boot with his riding switch, then looked up. 'Again, may I ask you to allow me to speak a few words with Miss Fraser?'

'Go in,' said Lewis ; 'I shall wait here until you have heard what she has to say.' He called out to the old woman in Gaelic, 'Come here, Mar-

garet. Lord Glarn will speak to Miss Annie alone.' She came out curtseying to the Marquis, who stooped his head under the low doorway and went in.

Annie had risen from the bed, and hurriedly put on her dress. It was still unfastened at the throat, and her pale hair fell all about her neck. But she came forwards holding out her hand to him with her usual inimitable grace and composure.

'I was nearly drowned last night,' she said, speaking with an innocent tremble in her voice, 'and Lewis brought me here. I could not walk another step. My uncle is dreadfully anxious, I'm afraid. You have come from him?'

The man looked at her as she stood before him in the dim, increasing light that fell upon her through the open door. She did not blush, or look in the very least confused. Her eyes were limpid, her cheeks pale, as if she still suffered from the shock of the night before.

'Can I take you home now? I have a carriage out there waiting,' he said. Annie was silent. He came a step nearer and took her hand in his. 'My dear young lady,' he said, 'you have been very foolish. Your uncle is an old, feeble man, and unable to come himself, or else I should never have presumed to follow you. Will you allow me to speak frankly to you, and say that you are, both of you, by persisting in this folly, simply

throwing away every chance in life. You are both very young ; you scarcely realise what you are doing.'

Still Annie stood hesitating. Through the half-open door she could see Lewis standing waiting in the dim light : a young heroic figure : his head turned aside, showing the fine lines of throat and shoulder that made the chief beauty of the man : he looked, for the moment, like a young Apollo : she remembered his tenderness to her in her fright, and (quality most dear to woman) his own perfectly unconscious courage.

As Lord Glarn spoke, she shook her head slightly, but her eyes were cast down. He, letting her hand fall, was silent too for another moment. To himself he said inwardly, ' She won't do it. Can I stoop to this ? ' And then, in so low a voice, that even had Lewis been listening he could not have heard, he uttered the words—

' My—wife—is—dying.'

Annie took no notice of what he said. One would have supposed she did not hear. She appeared to be lost in thought. Then, after a minute, she raised her face and looked at him. ' I will come back . . . to my uncle. I do not wish to vex him,' she said. ' Will you be so kind as to wait for a moment while I get on my cloak ? '

She threw the hood over her head, smoothing back her disordered hair, then she stepped out of



the door. The Marquis signalled to the carriage to drive up. Lewis came forward to meet her.

‘ Well, Annie, have you answered Lord Glarn, and told him why you are coming with me ? ’ His eyes were full of hope ; he thought this horrid deception had come to an end at last. Annie put her hand on his arm.

‘ I am going back to my uncle, Lewis, ’ she said sweetly. ‘ He is such an old man. He thinks I was drowned. Now, this would nearly kill him. I cannot break his heart. I was foolish. I was mad, I think, but I am going home. ’

‘ What do you mean ? ’ asked Lewis, in a voice so stern that the girl shrank before him—only for an instant. The truth in his eyes went piercing through and through her, as a sword might stab through silk. Annie did not attempt to say another word. She very seldom wept ; but as she stood there between the two men, her eyes filled suddenly up with tears. They rolled down her cheeks unheeded as she said again—

‘ I am going, Lewis. Good-bye. ’

‘ Do you know what that means, Annie ? It means that if you leave me now, you leave me for ever. ’ Again his eyes, it seemed, would pierce her through and through. Glarn drew a deep breath. He bit his lip waiting for her reply.

‘ Yes—I—know, ’ said Annie, with a pause between each word. Then, still with her inimitable

composure, she dried the tears from her face, and turning to the Marquis, she laid her hand on his arm. Still Lewis did not move. He watched her step across the grass, saw her enter the carriage. She turned her face to him once as she drove away ; it was the face of a martyred innocent, pale and grave. Lord Glarn mounted his horse and followed, riding some little distance behind. Twice he shrugged his shoulders, as a man might do who has seen some nauseating sight. 'How could I? How could I?' he said ; and then added aloud, 'But we needn't pretend to fine taste when we would bargain with the devil.'

As for Lewis, he stood, where they had left him, motionless, as if stricken into stone, till the sound of wheels had died away along the road. Then, without a groan, he sank suddenly down on the rude settle by the cottage door and buried his head in his arms. The old woman came towards him ; but after looking at him for a minute, as if conscious of his misfortune, she crept away.

He heard the slow dropping of the little spring that trickled through the grasses by the door ; each drop seemed to fall upon his brain. A flock of finches flew across the moor, and settled, fluttering on the stones beside him. He heard their sharp little calls to one another. When at last he lifted his head, he gazed about him stupidly, like a man in a dream. The sun had risen ; the broad

daylight filled the world. Like a white ribbon, there on the horizon lay the road along which Annie had driven away. He slowly rose to his feet and looked up into the sky.

‘Great God in heaven,’ he said, ‘can such things be?’

## CHAPTER XXII

‘ Look at that ! Look at that ! ’ said Mr. Jerningham, thrusting a note into Dinah’s hand. They were at breakfast, one bright morning, a fortnight after the date when Lewis had meant to leave Glarn. Dinah took the note, and read it through deliberately before she spoke. It was written in a very weak, scrawling hand, dated

‘ GLARN, 8th *May*.

‘ MY DEAR AUNT, ’—Jane Anne had written, ‘ You must have wondered at my long silence, but I am in great trouble. Mr. Campbell had a paralytic stroke last week, the very day before his son Lewis intended to have started for America. A report reached us suddenly that Lewis had been drowned in one of the caves on the shore, where he had been seen late on the previous evening, and the agitation must have hastened my husband’s illness. In my anxiety I have overstrained myself, and for a week past I have been so ill that I could do nothing. We have very inefficient servants ; there is no one but Lewis—who, of course,

has given up all thoughts of leaving home just now—to attend to anything, and I fear that baby is sadly neglected. Will you send me some assistance?’

Dinah raised her eyes to her father as she finished reading this. Mr. Jerningham was walking up and down the room with his hands in his pockets blowing with indignation.

‘There, there, there! That’s the end of it, as I always knew it would be,’ he went talking on. ‘What did the old idiot mean by marrying again at his age—goes off in a fit—leaving the wife and children to beg. I always knew it! I told you so. Confound them! Confound them all! What has an old dotard to do with marrying and leaving other people to look after his children? Children! Baby! An elderly scarecrow like Jane Anne—like an old umbrella—with a baby! Let her look after it herself. I’m not going to have anything to do with it. I’ll send her a five-pound note, and tell your mother to find a decent woman, and send her up to nurse them all—Campbell, and she, and the baby too—and that’s more than they deserve.’

‘I must go myself,’ said Dinah.

‘*What?*’

She did not repeat the remark, but helped herself to toast, and went quietly on with her breakfast.

Jerningham had stopped in his tramp about the room. He stood before Dinah as if expecting her to speak, then dropped into his seat, and began to eat again. Mrs. Jerningham took up the subject in her turn.

‘ Well,’ she said, glancing dubiously at her husband, ‘ if Dinah *did* go, it’s fine weather now. She needn’t stay long ; it could do no harm ; it would be cheaper than sending a nurse from here. We could get one for her later on if necessary, but by that time very likely the old man will have gone off. Jane Anne never needed much fuss made about her, and the servants can look after the child.’

‘ Dinah is not to go near them,’ said Jerningham.

‘ It will cost——’ began his wife.

Dinah interrupted her. Having finished her breakfast, she turned squarely on her father, with a resolution and finality in her voice compared to which his was mere bluster.

‘ I shall go to Glarn immediately, papa. I’m sorry you object, but I must go. Jane Anne may be dying.’

‘ Let her die, then.’

‘ Not without care at any rate. I must go.’

‘ And after that impertinent young fool tried to browbeat me about her, “ his father’s wife,” forsooth. You’re not to go, Dinah. I forbid you.’

‘ I ’m sorry to have to displease you, papa. I ’m going.’

Mr. Jerningham burst into an angry tirade that would have reduced most daughters into helpless acquiescence and weeping. Dinah, however, had inherited several of his own qualities ; and the end of it all, when he had exhausted every adjective he dared to apply (for he was somewhat in awe of the girl, after all), left her absolutely unruffled.

‘ Will you tell Sam to go and make inquiry about the coach ? ’ she said when he drew breath.

‘ D—n it ! D—n it ! I will not.’

Dinah rang the bell and gave the order.

‘ And I shall want some money too,’ she said, ‘ in case Jane Anne requires things when I get there.’

‘ Do you think I ’m going to be sponged on for money in this way by every sick person in the country ! I ’ll give you five pounds, I told you, and not a shilling more shall she get from me for doctor’s bills or funeral expenses—though they leave the old man above ground for a fortnight.’

‘ Oh, there may be a wright in the neighbourhood who could do it. They knock up a coffin very cheap,’ said his wife soothingly.

Dinah, with a massive disregard of these remarks, was now opening her own letters.

Mrs. Jerningham began to read snatches from

the newspaper: 'Two mad dogs killed near Windsor' (her selection was incongruous; she read everything in the same tone). 'Illness of the Marchioness of Glarn. We regret to state that the illness of the Marchioness of Glarn is very serious. She now lies in a critical condition at her residence in — Square. Her medical advisers have small hopes of her recovery.' 'Balloon accident at Vienna—narrow escape of three children.'

Dinah had not heard one of the items.

'I wonder if I shall find Annie Fraser at home when I go to Glarn,' she remarked, lifting an unopened letter from Annie. She gave an exclamation of surprise as she read.

'What is it? Is she going to be married?' asked Mrs. Jerningham.

'No,' Dinah answered; 'it is about her uncle, poor old man!'

'What, has he had a fit too? Those things often come in doubles,' said Mrs. Jerningham.

'No, he has not had a fit,' said Dinah, smiling; 'at least, Annie does not mention that, but she says that he has been ailing for a long time, and that now his illness has become so serious that an operation will be necessary, so they are going to London.'

'London!' echoed Mrs. Jerningham. 'What are they doing that for? Who'll pay for *that*, I should like to know? An old man too! An ex-



pensive operation probably, and he'll have nothing to leave. I never knew how that girl got her dresses, I'm sure.'

'Annie says that they will be in Ubster for a day on their way south, but I'm afraid I shan't see her if I go to Glarn.'

Mr. Jerningham got up angrily and left the room. Dinah continued to discuss her journey with her mother, planning the things which she was likely to need to take with her to Glarn.

'You must ask your father for the money yourself, Dinah; I won't,' said Mrs. Jerningham as they left the breakfast table.

'Yes, certainly; I'll go now,' said the girl. 'You can tell Thomas to go and inquire about the coach.'

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE coach rattled along the broad street as they spoke, and Mrs. Jerningham cried out, 'Why, there's Annie Fraser at this moment. She waved her hand as she passed; they must be going to the inn.'

'So it is!' said Dinah, who had caught sight of Annie's little pale face, as the coach drove past the house. 'She must have left on Friday. I shall go along and see them as soon as they have had time to settle down a bit. Poor Annie! what a long journey to take with that blind old man!'

Later in the afternoon Dinah went out with the intention of calling at the inn. It was impossible for her to leave for Glarn until the following day. She met Annie in the street when she was coming out of a shop. Annie had an anxious, strained look that made Dinah think her anxiety about her uncle must be great. Her lips were tightened, and her face was pale. She replied to Dinah's greeting absently.

'Yes, it's very sad about Mr. Campbell; he'll get over it though, but they think your cousin is

dying. Oh, I had no time to go and see them before I came away. I had so much to do. I've left uncle at the inn.'

Dinah was standing by the dressmaker's door. It was a shop, the only one of any importance in Ubster, where she knew that Annie got her own dresses.

'Come in with me,' said Dinah, 'and then I can walk back with you.'

'No, no,' said Annie hastily; 'I can't, I've got some things to buy for uncle. Go home, Dinah, and I will come and see you there. That will be better than your coming back with me.'

Dinah saw that she was annoyed, so she did not press the point, but went into the shop and left her.

When she had disappeared, Annie drew a deep breath of relief. 'I hope that woman didn't see me,' she said to herself. Then she shook her veil down over her bonnet, looked up and down the street to make sure that no one was watching her, and turned down a byelane that led into a dark alley belonging to the old part of the town.

It was very dirty; she had to pick her way daintily along the uneven pavements, that were strewn with all kinds of refuse. She went along the narrow close for a short distance. At one end there was a pawnbroker's sign, the three golden balls, the only bright spot in the sordid place. Before she came up to it, Annie stopped

at a little print shop and bought a newspaper. She stood inside the door and lifted her veil, while her hands trembled so that she could scarcely open the sheet. She glanced her eyes over the first columns, then she laid it down again and walked out of the shop. 'Not yet; I must do it then,' she thought, and taking a little parcel out of her muff, she walked up the dirty staircase that led to the pawnbroker's door.

An old man with a sly, smeared face took the parcel from her, going to the window to examine its contents in the light. All Annie's little ornaments were there—a ring or two that had belonged to her mother. He smiled at her, peering up at her face under the veil, and shook his head.

'I want to sell them,' said Annie. 'How much will you give me?'

'Thirty shillings maybe.'

'Oh, very well, that's no use,' she answered, stretching out her hand for the parcel.

She had hoped that he would offer more, but he handed them back to her, and watched her turn away without a word.

She went to two other shops with even less result, and now the afternoon was wearing on. 'I may get more for them in London, or something may have happened by that time, if I can *only* get her to wait for another week.'

She took a note out of her pocket, and re-read

it, though she knew its contents pretty well by heart. It was from the very dressmaker's shop that Dinah had asked her to go into along with her, curtly intimating that as Miss Fraser's bills had run up for so long, and were still, after repeated applications, unpaid, they would now take legal proceedings. Annie crushed it angrily in her hand. 'And to think how much money Dinah has!' she reflected. 'If I can *only* get the woman to wait, but I dare not go in. I must write after I get to London.'

After she left Annie, and had finished her interview with the dressmaker, Dinah had gone home. She knew that her father was in his study at that hour, so she went straight to the door. At the threshold she paused for a moment, just as Jane Anne had paused years before, when she went into that room to inform Jerningham of her marriage. But Dinah's pause on the threshold was not of irresolution; it was merely to discover the best means of attack. Jerningham sat at the great writing-table with a pile of letters beside him. Dinah came quickly across the floor and stood just behind his chair. She then said in the most matter-of-fact tone—

'I've come for the money, papa. Can you give it to me now?'

'What money?' said Jerningham, without raising his head or laying down his pen.

‘The money I must take with me to Glarn.’

‘I told you I’d give you five pounds ; you can ask your mother for that.’

‘I shall want twenty, papa ; at least, twenty will do just now.’

‘D’ you suppose I’ve got twenty pounds ready at any moment ?’

‘You can give me a cheque.’

He laid down his pen at last. ‘Look here,’ he said, ‘I told Jane Anne when she married, that she might take her own way if she chose to make a fool of herself, but that she needn’t look for help from me. I told that young fool Lewis that I wouldn’t forget his insolence to me in a hurry. I told *you* that I’d give the woman five pounds, and that’s all she’ll get out of me to bury her husband, herself, and the baby too, so you may go away, Dinah.’

Dinah stood still behind his chair.

‘There, there, I’m busy, I have to go out to the office now. Go away.’

She did not move.

With a quick oath, Jerningham pushed away his chair and turned to face her. Dinah, with a manner, for the moment, curiously like his own, held out her hand.

‘Give it to me now, papa, before you go out.’

The office boy knocked at the door and requested Jerningham’s immediate attendance.

‘There you are,’ he exclaimed, scribbling the cheque, and tossing it towards her. ‘Put that in my desk again, and confound them all.’ He slapped the cheque-book down upon the table, and hurried out of the room.

‘There ’s a lady to see you, Miss,’ said the boy ; Dinah, without stopping to replace the cheque-book in the desk, stepped out into the hall to welcome Annie.

‘Oh, just come in here,’ she said. ‘Father has gone out. Wait for a minute or two, Annie; I have something important to do.’

She sent the boy off to get the cheque cashed for her immediately, and left Annie in the library, while she ran upstairs to tell her mother that she had got the money, forgetting entirely that the cheque-book was left on the table.

Mrs. Jerningham had some small reason for detaining her, so that she was away for about five minutes. When she came down again, Annie was calmly standing by the window putting two bits of paper into her purse. One of them was a long, narrow slip. She shut the purse with a click as Dinah came in. Her eyes were brighter than usual.

‘Are you really going to Glarn, Dinah?’

‘Yes; I ’m going to-morrow.’

Annie sat down on the edge of Jerningham’s great, leather-covered easy-chair, her pale face in

the searching light, her hands clasped tightly on her knee, her short-sighted eyes blinking a little in the sun. Dinah asked her all about her uncle's illness, and inquired about where they were going to in London, to which Annie replied evasively. At last she looked again at Dinah, and repeated her remark—

‘ You are really going to Glarn ? ’

‘ Yes, to-morrow, ’ said Dinah again.

Annie flushed a thin, clear scarlet for an instant, over all her white face. Dinah had never seen her redden before. ‘ Well, ’ she said, ‘ in that case I ’d better tell you ; you ’ll hear it from some one else. It will save trouble, and save my own reputation too in the end, for it ’s sure to come out in a mangled form. Do you know what brought on Mr. Campbell’s illness, Dinah ? ’

‘ Yes ; Jane Anne told us that in her letter. She said that he suddenly heard a report that Lewis had been drowned. ’

‘ It was the night before Lewis was going to have started for America. He had persuaded me to come with him. ’

‘ *You,* ’ said Dinah.

Annie laughed. ‘ Yes. Wasn’t it curious to want a person like me ? ’ She flickered her eyelids, watching Dinah’s face.

‘ Oh, Annie, I did not mean that ; I was only surprised. ’



Annie nodded. 'You know that Mr. Campbell and my uncle would neither of them ever have consented to our getting married here ; so we had arranged to go away together without making a fuss. Old people are so unpleasant when they get excited.'

Her thoughts seemed suddenly to have strayed away to something different. An absent look stole into her face. She played with the corner of her cloak, plaiting it up in her fingers, and smoothing it out again with care.

Dinah stared at this incomprehensible levity. 'Well, Annie, what happened then?' she said in a low voice.

Annie came back to her subject with a start. 'O-o,' she said, with the little chuckle in her throat that some people found so touching, 'I really meant to do it at the time—but—oh!' She threw out her hands and shivered. 'We were nearly drowned, Dinah ; and I realised what a fuss it would all make, and how it would have distressed all the old people. I remembered about uncle's illness——'

'Rather late,' said Dinah. She sat upright, pressing her hands together, looking at Annie with her great eyes, her face assuming a severity that made it quite old for a moment.

Annie went on without heeding her. 'Oh, it was horrible ! We had to go to a cottage, for it

was late at night, and we were a long way from home, and I was almost dead. And then in the morning a message came from uncle.' She paused, and went on with an almost imperceptible hurrying over this part of her story. 'Lord Glarn came after us. He had promised uncle to find out whether the story about our being drowned was true.'

'Why did he go?'

'Oh, because he happened to meet uncle, and saw how distressed he was—so I came home; and Lewis, I think, would have gone away, but he got a message about his father's illness. Queer, wasn't it? And then in a day or two uncle got worse, and so we had to come away, and that was the end of it all.'

'The end of it all!' Dinah repeated, as if she had not understood Annie's words.

'Yes, yes, yes, just folly,' laughed Annie.

'Did you love Lewis Campbell?' said Dinah, looking down at her.

'I thought I did.'

'Then, I do not understand why you turned back at the last moment.'

'Because I was almost drowned.'

'What had that to do with it?' said Dinah.

'It didn't drown your love.'

'Yes, I think it did. You can't understand, Dinah. I never supposed you could. You're not

like that. I suddenly saw everything different—everything just burst like a soap-bubble.’

She spoke with composure, and was quite unprepared for the sudden, passionate contempt in Dinah’s voice as she answered her.

‘I’m glad I don’t understand you, Annie.’

Annie rose and held out her hand. ‘I must go now, Dinah. Good-bye. Why are you so angry? I’d have imagined you would have been horribly shocked by the idea of my running away with Lewis, not at my giving it up. *You* don’t think that it would have been *right* to do that surely, Dinah?’

‘Right!’ echoed Dinah; then, with one of her quick, sweeping movements, she flung Annie’s hand away and turned from her. ‘*Bah!*’ she said; ‘*you can neither do right nor wrong!*’

Annie attempted no further farewell. She nodded, ‘Good-bye, Dinah!’ and leaving Dinah still standing looking away from her, she went softly out of the room, out of the house, and hurried up the broad, uneven street, clasping her purse tightly in her fingers.

‘I’ll pay the bills from London now,’ she said, as she passed the dressmaker’s shop.

## CHAPTER XXIV

EVERY ONE who came in contact with her understood that where Miss Jerningham's arrangements were concerned, matters had to be pressed forward ; so it was that, in spite of tardy coaches, delays by roadside inns, and such like incidents belonging to the inconvenient journey, Dinah arrived at Glarn only three days after she had heard of her cousin's illness.

She stood at the door when the hired chaise in which she had driven for the last few miles had rumbled away. 'Can this be the place?' she wondered. The house was so dark, so silent, so inexpressibly lonely.

She could see no door bell or knocker ; so after waiting for a few moments in hopes of the appearance of a servant, she came walking into the house, glanced into the sitting-rooms on the left and right, and finding them empty, made her way along to the kitchen. It was empty too, save for old Phemie, who, worn out by two nights of watching, sat sound asleep by the fire. She did not waken at the sound of Dinah's entrance.

When Miss Jerningham bent over her and spoke, she only replied by an incoherent murmur, and rolled her head to the other side.

After an instant's consideration, Dinah removed her heavy travelling cloak and veil, drew off her gloves, and then went softly upstairs. On the upper landing she paused, for at the end of one of the narrow passages she saw a door standing ajar. She went forward to it noiselessly. Some one was walking up and down the floor. It could not be the sick-room, she concluded, so she gently pushed the door open and looked in. She saw Lewis walking up and down with the child in his arms, and he was singing it asleep, his voice as soft as honey, in the dusk. It was the same tune that Dinah had heard him sing before—

*'Rose of the World! Star of the Sea!*

*Mother of sinners, pray for me!'*

'Lewis!' said Dinah quietly, stepping forward from the shadow where she stood. He started, and she held out her hands instinctively to catch the child in case he let it fall.

'Oh, give her to me,' she said, and Lewis very willingly relinquished his burden. She explained her sudden arrival, then she sat down on the low chair by the fire with the baby on her knee—it had fallen asleep almost as soon as she had taken it—and asked him to tell her about Jane Anne's illness, and how his father was.

The confusion and distress of the past week, the sense that the young man had had of being necessary in the house, and yet helpless at the same time, lightened all at once under Dinah's presence. By and bye he took her to Jane Anne's room. It was almost dark. 'The lass' who had been sitting beside the bed rose with a clumsy curtsy, as this apparition of a tall, stately, strange young lady entered the room; but the sick woman did not seem to find her presence at all remarkable. As Dinah bent over her pillow and laid her firm, cold hand on hers, she opened her eyes.

'Ah, Dinah, you've come. I knew you would come,' she whispered. Then, as Dinah told her not to speak, 'You will take care of my little baby,' she said, and as she turned her face on the pillow with a sigh, she murmured, 'I can sleep now, thank God.'

There be some (alas! too few of us) 'born for adversity,' as the Scripture says, and Dinah Jer-ningham was one of these. From the hour when she entered the disordered little household, everything was changed. After the first few days, when Jane Anne seemed to be out of danger, Dinah left the sick-room for a while and turned her attention to the disorganised domestic affairs. It was with something of a militant spirit that she put things to rights. Phemie trembled in silence before her, although she never spoke an angry

word. Like magic, a degree of order that had never been known there for many a long day stole over the poor, little household.

It was a strange companionship for the two young people left alone in the silent house. When Dinah had sat in the nursery the night that she had arrived, the sight of its meagre, poverty-stricken appointments had gone to her heart. When she put the baby to bed, and recognised Jane Anne's unskilful handiwork in its grotesque flannel garments, a lump rose in her throat. She naturally was inclined to put rather too high a value on the luxuries of life. She liked them for their own sake, and had always been used to having them ; and the sight of this house, so much poorer than she had expected it to be, impressed her profoundly.

As the days went by, and her anxiety about Jane Anne lessened, she had time to observe and comment to herself upon the change in Lewis. His face had hardened strangely in a few weeks. Lines invisible before had now been stamped there indelibly.

Dinah made no allusion to having seen Annie at all ; nor did he mention it to her. He would sit in silence beside her when they were alone ; and she, having the rare gift of maintaining silence without an effort, made no attempt to intrude upon his thoughts.

But one day they were both in Jane Anne's room. She was now allowed to speak a little, and had been asking Dinah all sorts of questions.

'Annie Fraser has never been here, Lewis,' she said innocently. 'Has she never come to inquire for your father?'

Dinah looked up and met Lewis's eyes fixed on her.

'I must tell you about Annie some other time,' she said to Jane Anne. 'You must go to sleep now, Janie, and not talk any more. Come away, Lewis, let us leave her quiet now.'

'You have heard about Father Fraser's illness, Dinah?' said Lewis, when they had left the room.

'Yes,' said Dinah; and she added deliberately, 'I saw Annie before I left Ubster.'

Lewis did not speak. Dinah glanced at his lowering brow and tightened lips.

'Annie told me about what had happened that night before all this,' she went on.

'She did, did she!' said he, raising his head. 'And what did she tell you, Dinah?'

Dinah repeated the story.

'Was it not true?' she asked.

'You have known Annie all these years,' he said.

'Yes,' said Dinah, 'since we were at school together.'



‘ And have you ever known her speak the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about anything?’ said Lewis bitterly ; for, ah ! during these last few weeks he had found out for himself that this is true ; a single deception in any one whom we have trusted once may light up, all of a sudden, in one day—in an hour maybe—a whole train of circumstances as we have never seen them before, and the faith of years vanishes at the sight.

Dinah was silent, then she said slowly, ‘ I don’t know about that. I think Annie never deceives herself. She always knows what she is doing. Sometimes she speaks the truth ; at least, at school she could speak it when she liked.’

She looked at Lewis, wondering what the whole truth had been.

But in the course of the next week her thoughts were directed to quite other matters. Another shadow fell upon the house ; for as Jane Anne gradually gained strength, old Mr. Campbell grew weaker and weaker, and he died one night without any return to consciousness or any word of farewell.

During the days that followed his death, the whole weight of everything seemed to fall upon Dinah, for Jane Anne was utterly unnerved and distraught. On the evening after the funeral, Lewis and Dinah sat alone together in the oppres-

sive stillness that had reigned in the house since morning. Dinah looked across at the young man, who had been silent for a long time.

‘What are you going to do now, Lewis?’ she asked. ‘Are you going to live on at Glarn?’

He startled her by the sudden, harsh laugh he gave in reply.

‘Do! I don’t care what I do; my life’s all broken.’

Dinah’s consolations were always of an extremely practical order.

‘The more reason why you should think of others, then,’ she said.

‘You mean my stepmother and the child?’

‘Yes; will they live on here?’

Lewis started. ‘No, Dinah; I must tell you about that, it’s a miserable story. You will despise me for ever when you have heard it.’ Then, slowly, with great pauses between his sentences (Dinah listened in patient silence the whole time), he told her the whole story of how he had played with the Marquis that night—what the stake had been—and how he had lost everything.

When he had finished, Dinah made no remark except to say, ‘You’ll have to get some work then if you must leave Glarn.’

‘I suppose so,’ he answered vaguely, and then he noticed that Dinah gave a little stamp of irritation with her foot on the floor, an action he asso-

ciated very much with Jerningham. He looked at her in surprise.

‘I told you, you would think me a fool,’ he said.

‘Yes,’ answered Dinah suddenly, ‘I do ; you are ; everything I ’ve ever seen you do is foolish.’

There was such a likeness to one of her father’s speeches in this frank declaration, that Lewis almost laughed in spite of the angry flush that mounted to his face. He controlled himself with an effort.

‘I have too much reason to be grateful to you, Miss Jerningham, to be angry at anything you may choose to say,’ he answered.

‘Grateful !’ echoed Dinah. ‘How can you talk such nonsense ? One need not be grateful to any one whom one cares about at all. I am sorry I spoke so rudely just now. Will you forgive me, Lewis ?’

He was silent, for he had been very deeply hurt.

Dinah went on : ‘You know that you are foolish, because you throw away things for nothing. With half a reason it wouldn’t be so bad. You threw up the chance you had in my father’s office because of a few angry words. You have just told me how you threw away all your property for an hour’s excitement. And I know,’ she looked straight at him as she spoke, ‘that you ’ve

gone and thrown away all your happiness for . . .  
Annie Fraser !’

The tone in which Dinah uttered the last words showed very conclusively why she thought him a fool.

## CHAPTER XXV

A ROW of sparrows sat all along the edge of the high blank wall and fluffed out their feathers, and chirruped with new notes, for there had been a heavy, quick shower of rain, and now everything smelt fresh and delightful. The great walls of the convent shut out all further view on one side of the narrow street. Annie, as she idly watched the birds from the window on the opposite side of the street, wondered what they could see from their position of vantage. In the middle of the wall there was a low doorway, encircled by a sculptured cord that ended in two huge stone knots. Only twice since she had arrived four days before had any sign of life been visible. Once it was a message boy who had been admitted by the invisible guardian of the gate ; the second time a sister, hooded and shapeless, in black garments, with a sly, fat face. The Mother Superior herself, who had given the address of the lodgings to them, had come over two or three times to inquire for the old priest, and she had been very favourably impressed by the quiet tenderness with which

Annie spoke about him. She had also sounded her gently as to whether, in the event of her uncle's recovery proving hopeless, Annie would have any fancy for joining them. But to the Reverend Mother's questions, Annie, with down-cast eyes, had replied that she was not worthy to become the Bride of Christ.

She had been sitting idly at the window for an hour and more, listening at first to the quick rapping of the summer rain upon roofs and windows, then watching the sparrows preening themselves after the shower had ceased. She rang the bell at last and asked the landlady, for the third time that afternoon, if no letter had come for her.

'I must ; I daren't wait another day,' she said to herself. 'Oh ! if I could only be sure.'

Here the landlady appeared again in bonnet and cloak. 'I'm going out now, Miss, and can get what you wanted from the bank,' she said.

Annie hesitated, looked at the clock, then said, 'Oh yes, thank you ; wait a moment.' She unlocked a little desk that stood on the table and took out a cheque, hurriedly signed a name across it, and looked for a bit of paper to wrap it in. Her hands were trembling, but her face was calm. There seemed nothing but letters in the desk. She took up one hurriedly ; it was the note from Mr. Jerningham, on the blank sheet of which Lewis had once written out their contract of mar-

riage. The pencil lines were still on the top, with his signature, and the place for hers left blank. She tore it quickly across, wrapped the cheque up in the clean bit of paper, thrust it into an envelope, and gave it to the landlady. 'Thank you, that's all; and be sure that you bring back the money, for I am in a hurry for it,' she said. When the woman had gone, Annie sat for a minute gazing abstractedly before her, then took from the desk the remainder of the letter with the scrap of paper that bore Lewis's name, and lighting a match, she burnt it in the grate, holding the end until her fingers were singed at the tips.

It was done at last, and only a little end of blackened paper ash left in the grate. She rubbed her fingers and drew a sigh of relief. When the landlady came back from the bank and gave her the money, she looked at the girl closely: 'You should perhaps be thinking of getting a nurse for your uncle now, Miss; he's far gone.'

'I think I must look after him myself to the last,' Annie answered. She did not see the significance with which the woman folded her lips at this reply.

It had cleared by this time into a fine mild evening. Annie was restless, and went out to get some fresh air. As she came up the lane, she met a man walking quickly down, and at sight of him her colour changed suddenly. It was Vere—Lord

Glarn's cousin. He came up to her smiling. 'I was coming to inquire for your uncle,' he said; 'but let me walk on with you, as you are going out.'

Annie consented, and they went up the narrow street together. She held a letter in her hand addressed to a dressmaker in Ubster, and he noticed that her face was pale.

'How is Lord Glarn?' she asked at last, glancing up at him under her eyelashes; her lips were dry, and she could hardly utter the words.

'Oh, he's all right,' Vere answered. He did not add the information that Annie longed for, and she dared not trust her voice to ask. At the head of the lane a newsboy was shouting out details from the evening papers. Annie listened as she talked to Vere, but in the hoarse shouting she could not distinguish the name that she wanted to hear.

A nun came out of the convent door, and Annie curtseyed devoutly to her as they passed. 'It is the Reverend Mother,' she said to Vere.

'I am glad to see that poor child taking a breath of air at last,' thought the good lady, watching them. 'She looks pale, as if the anxiety had been too much for her;' and she looked from under her hood with some disapproval at Vere, with his slightly battered air, bending earnestly to talk to the girl at his side.



‘I only came out to post this ; I must go home now,’ said Annie to him, as she slipped the letter that she had been carrying into the letter-box that stood at the head of the lane.

## CHAPTER XXVI

Two days had passed, days of sultry heat, with the threatening feeling of coming thunder. It was a dark afternoon, without a breath of wind anywhere. As the clock of the convent struck, Annie turned away from the window and went and looked in to her uncle's bedroom, which opened off the sitting-room. She satisfied herself that he was asleep, and then returning, took up the newspaper that had lain on the table since breakfast.

She had not needed to re-read the announcement once all this time. Now she looked at it with a smile, and then laid the paper aside, for the words had danced before her eyes all morning : ' On the 11th, at her residence, —— Square, Catherine Mary, Marchioness of Glarn.' A mere line. Annie had read it that morning without a change of countenance ; had read it aloud to her uncle afterwards without a quiver in her voice ; but she had been restless all day, and now she flung herself into a chair, and tossed out her hands with a gesture of weariness, looking round the parlour as

if in search of any object that could afford her a moment's diversion. It was only a very ordinary lodging-house room, filled with pieces of furniture bought at sales, having no relation to each other, or to the taste of any single individual, each article of dreary ugliness in itself rendered worse by its divorce from its original setting.

Annie was not one of those women who carry a home about with them wherever they go, so she had not thought it worth while to make any effort to relieve the ugliness of her surroundings. She was not vain either ; so when at last she heard a voice inquiring if she was at home, and knew that the visitor whom she had been expecting had arrived, she did not glance at the mirror (the awful cheap mirror) above the mantelpiece, as many, as most women would have done, nor alter her position where she sat in the harsh light. She was of far too deeply practical a nature to attend to trifles of that sort.

When, therefore, the landlady, with hushed voice, announced 'The Marquis of Glarn,' all that her visitor beheld when he entered was a little figure, in a shabby dress, sitting alone in the dreary, dingy, unfamiliar room, sitting bending forwards, her hands clasped slackly on her knees. But the brilliant eyes that were fixed on him as she silently waited for him to speak, without rising from her chair, or giving him any greeting, were

like the bright innocent eyes of a snake as it watches and does not stir.

He crossed acres of worn huge-patterned carpet ; trodden skin rugs, chairs—lodging-house chairs, and rickety things seemed to be standing everywhere in his way. It was only three or four steps from the door to where she sat, but it seemed a mile before he reached her chair. The hands of the fly-spotted gilt clock on the mantelpiece had not ticked thrice, but it seemed as if minutes had passed before she spoke.

‘I thought that you would come,’ she said, still without moving.

‘You know then? You——’ He stood before her trembling.

Annie just lifted one of her little hands with a delicate fluttering motion towards him, and, lo ! the chain had snapped. He knelt down suddenly by the chair where she sat, and she heard his breath caught quick like sobs.

‘Ah ! ah !’ he whispered, ‘*I feel ! I feel !—* at last,’ and he hid his face on her knees. ‘Oh, lay your little hands upon my head, Annie ! Mercy ! mercy ! I think my heart will break !’

Annie was not much given to caresses, nor prodigal of them at any time. She merely allowed her two hands to drop softly on his head for an instant as he knelt there with his face against her knees. She felt how he trembled, and her face twisted up

into an odd momentary smile. He rose up again slowly, looking about the room in a dazzled way.

‘It has been a year since yesterday!’ he said.

‘It has been a long day to me too,’ said Annie gently. ‘I have not been able to leave my uncle at all, and it is not like being at home here, I have so little to do.’

A feeble voice sounded from the next room at that moment, and she hurried away, relieved that the tension of such a scene was over. Lord Glarn heard her moving about in the sick man’s room, speaking rather sharply. ‘The old man must be deaf,’ he thought. ‘She raises her voice.’ After a minute or two she came back again, softly closing the door behind her.

‘Uncle gets a little feverish in the afternoon,’ she said, ‘so I cannot let you see him. He heard your voice, and he wanted to see you, but it does him harm to speak.’

Lord Glarn by this time had recovered his usual composure, and his face was impassive as ever as he spoke. ‘I shall go abroad—for a while—as soon as——’ he paused for a moment—‘as everything is over. When I come back, Annie?’ He watched her face, her downcast eyes.

‘Oh, perhaps—a long time in the future,’ said Annie. The words were scarcely audible, but the manner was encouraging.

‘I shall come on Monday and bid you good-bye.’

Can I offer you any assistance in any way? Has everything that can be done been arranged for your uncle's comfort while he is here?'

'Oh yes; the Reverend Mother has been most kind.'

He stood as if undecided whether to leave without saying more, and then he added, 'You left the district rather suddenly after that morning when I brought you home to Edderty.'

'Yes; we had to decide immediately.'

'Did you see Campbell again before you left?'

'No; I did not see him.'

'Did you write to him?'

'No; I had no time.'

'You have heard of the old man's death, I suppose?'

'Yes,' said Annie; 'I was very sorry.'

The Marquis looked at her. 'You are a sympathetic creature,' he said.

Annie could judge nothing of his meaning by the tone of the remark. 'What do you mean?' she asked.

He laughed. 'I mean something of what Shakespeare meant.'

'Where?' said Annie, whose knowledge of the poet was limited to select passages read with Miss Macneil's young ladies.

He gazed at her—her fair head, her slight figure, that had a pensive air in its shabby black

dress, at the soft little hands that had been placed on his bowed head as he knelt there before her a few minutes ago.

‘When my Love swears that she is made of Truth,  
*I do believe her, tho’ I know she lies,*’

he said slowly.

‘I ’m very stupid about poetry. I never understand,’ said Annie, with extreme simplicity.

She then said good-bye to him, went and stood by the window, and watched him go down the narrow quiet street. The sparrows had flown off upon their own errands now, the sun shone out again upon the blank walls and the low shut door of the convent. Annie looked at it with perfect satisfaction. She dabbed with her handkerchief at two flies that were buzzing loudly on the window panes, killed them, shook them away, and turned from the window with a sweet smile as the landlady came in.

‘I must go out now,’ she said to her, ‘and if Father Fraser requires anything while I am away, he will ring for you.’

When she was ready to go out, she put her head in at the bedroom door. ‘Mrs. Willis will attend to you when I am out, uncle,’ she called.

‘I should like the window open, Annie, it is so hot,’ he murmured.

She stepped up to the window, but the cords

were grimy, and she had on a pair of new gloves. 'Oh, it will only let in the dust, uncle ; it 's much better shut,' she said decisively. She moved the blind a bit, set down a cup of cold, half-eaten food beside him, and hurried out of the room. 'I shall be late now, and Lady Jane is so particular.'

'I am so hot, Annie, if you could change my things,' he began, but Annie answered as she turned away—

'I 'll do it when I come in ; I really haven't time just now.'



## CHAPTER XXVII

JANE ANNE was a bereaved widow, more perhaps in the abstract than as an individual. The shock of her husband's death had at first thrown her back in her recovery, and for some weeks afterwards she was very ill indeed. Dinah and Lewis watched over her and nursed her together ; she was surrounded by a tenderness that she had never before experienced. As she began to get better, she was, of course, in her own conventional fancy, entirely bereaved, weighed down by a sense of the desolation of her widowhood. But, after all, in reality she was not broken-hearted. The responsibilities of married life had been too heavy for her. She had always stood much in awe of her husband ; and now, when her affection for him was safe in the unchangeable past, she could indulge in the peaceful sorrow of a devoted wife, and worship his sainted memory without misgivings. Dinah had broken to her gradually the idea that it would be necessary for them to leave Glarn 'because of money matters.' When Lewis had spoken to her about it, she assented imme-

diately without precise inquiry. Indeed, she would have considered it a sadly unfeminine thing to do to have asked a man any questions about pecuniary affairs. With Dinah, however, the matter was different. She did not ask Lewis about his affairs, it is true ; but one day after he had spent some hours in colloquy with his father's lawyer, who had come from Uster to see him, he told her that the Marquis had written to offer him a handsome price for Glarn. 'For as to that night's folly,' he wrote, 'if you will agree to this, I shall consider the whole matter settled. I played you for "Naboth's Vineyard," but I never wanted to get it for nothing.' He added that he was going abroad for some time, and would hear Lewis's decision on his return.

Dinah read the letter, and astonished Lewis as she handed it back to him by saying that she thought he ought to take the money.

'Take it !' echoed Lewis in amazement ; 'I would as soon steal as take his money for that ; it's a debt like any other ; I won't take a sixpence for it.'

But Dinah had inherited some of Jerningham's respect for money.

'The whole thing was foolish,' she said. 'But you tell me that at the time he offered to pay you, and I'm sure that he ought to. You were both wrong to gamble, and the best way to atone for

it now is that he should pay, and that you should sell him the place as you promised.'

'I never promised to sell it! I promised that he should have it if he won it. He did, and it is mine no longer. But,' he added, 'I fear we shall never agree upon some points, Miss Jerningham. You've told me once already that you thought me a fool; you'll say so more than ever now, I suppose.'

'I will,' Dinah answered, laughing, and somehow this time the accusation did not hurt him at all. She entered into the question of his affairs as solidly and as keenly as her father might have done, and Lewis fairly laughed at the eagerness of her business-like questions.

'It is not a brilliant prospect, you see,' he said, when at last he had explained everything to her. 'It may perhaps be possible for my stepmother and the child to live on what remains, but that's all.'

'What more would you wish?' said the girl. 'You surely wouldn't want to do nothing.'

Many weeks had now passed since she had come to Glarn, and as yet she had never spoken about going home. Her parents had left Ubster for a while, so that it was not necessary for her to return, and Jane Anne depended on her so helplessly, that it would have been cruel for her to leave just then. Everything in the household had devolved upon her. She never appeared to feel

the isolation and loneliness of Glarn that had so haunted Jane Anne upon her first arrival.

‘You have things to occupy you indoors, Janie, just the same as if you lived in the biggest town in the world,’ she would say when her cousin complained of the oppressive solitude.

Dinah liked to stand in front of the house and look round and round about her, seeing everywhere, on every side, the same wastes of red blooming moorland, the hills rising like a rampart against the sky. Since her arrival time had never hung heavy on her hands for an instant.

When she stood in the kitchen cooking, with a white apron on, her whole energetic nature completely absorbed in the task, Phemie and ‘the lass’ would exchange glances, wondering if it were possible that she could be an heiress after all.

‘There’s low blood in one that can raise a cake like that, Phemie,’ the girl remarked. Even Phemie, who in youth had been accustomed to the notable housewives of the North, had a lingering feeling that Miss Jerningham’s cookery was a trifle too masterly for a ‘lady-born.’ But she came in time to regard the girl with something like adoration in spite of this.

‘You would make a splendid wife for a poor man, Dinah,’ Jane Anne exclaimed one day, watching her with a timid, regretful look, as she

went about various household occupations in a style that the best trained servant might have envied.

‘Oh, I don’t know about that,’ the girl answered, laughing; ‘I am too fond of having everything right, Janie.’

On Sundays, when Jane Anne was unable to go to church, Dinah used to go alone with Lewis. It was no distance. They had merely to cross the grass in front of the house, to walk for about a hundred yards, as the little tinkling bell was stopping, and the peasant people who were sauntering up the knoll began to drop in one by one to the small building. Then Dinah would step down into the church (for the floor was sunk below the level of the ground outside, and you stepped into it as into a cellar) and occupy the corner of the pew where poor Jane Anne used to sit and shiver while listening to her husband’s ministration.

The country people grew to know her and to watch for her steadfast face. Dinah felt none of the dreariness there which had so oppressed Jane Anne. She liked the stillness, the smell of damp and old wood, the small, clear-paned windows, and the wailing sound of the Highland voices in the uncouth Psalms.

One Sunday afternoon they were sitting at church together. Dinah noticed during the ser-

vice how Lewis had leaned his head on his arms and sat with his face hidden the whole time. She looked at him, pitying him, for she thought that he was thinking about Annie. He was, in fact, but not quite as Dinah imagined. As the sermon droned on, he remembered how he used to sit there, counting the moments until he should be able to see her again. He held up before himself the image of what he had once so worshipped and desired, and found that it had shrivelled and changed into something unrecognisable. He thought of all his promises, his vows and his passion, and the whole thing seemed to belong now to another life. Dinah, looking at his bowed head, felt herself outside of his grief and unable to offer him any help. She looked very grave indeed as, the service at an end, they sat watching whilst the handful of people slowly dispersed. They, too, rose when the church was empty, and came out together into the sunshine at the door.

‘I shall never forget the Sundays here,’ said Dinah.

She tried to shake off her gravity, and pointed to one of the stones by the door.

‘Who was this Margaret Campbell?’ she asked. ‘An ancestress of yours?’

She rubbed away as she spoke at the yellow lichen that was clinging to the stone.

‘Oh! I’ll tell you that story,’ said Lewis, his

face brightening. 'She was the one I liked best of all. I used to ask my father to tell it to me over and over. She was the one with the branded cheek.'

'Was she burnt?' asked Dinah idly, thinking not about the subject of the story, but about another woman who, at that moment, was afraid she might betray what she felt.

As Lewis went on with the story, however, she raised her eyes to his face and listened eagerly. He told her how, when the Campbells were outlawed at the time of Argyle's rebellion, this girl had followed her lover, who was one of them, gone with him 'to prison and to judgment,' and in the gang of prisoners had been shipped off to the Barbadoes along with him.

'They cut off the men's ears, and branded the women on the cheek,' he concluded. 'She came home, an old woman, nearly fifty years afterwards, and the people had a legend that there were scars on her left cheek.'

Dinah had been listening spellbound. Suddenly he noticed that as he spoke she had put up her hand and was smoothing her cheek with it.

'Did he love her too?' she asked in a low voice.

'Well, I suppose so; history does not relate, but they were married anyhow. I should think he did if she was a woman like that.'

‘Those things are not always equal,’ said Dinah.

‘No,’ said Lewis bitterly ; he was thinking about Annie.

With one accord they moved silently forward through the long grass, down the little, steep path, Dinah still thoughtfully smoothing her cheek with her hand.

‘Yes, yes, you would have done it, Dinah,’ said Lewis, and she dropped her hand and looked up at him quickly, blushing all over her face.

‘Oh, Dinah,’ cried the young man suddenly, taking her hands in his, ‘I have been mad, I think—a fool beyond all others—blind. I am not worthy that you should ever waste a thought upon me, only tell me that you do not despise me for ever, and let me think——’

He stopped, confused and hesitating. Dinah drew her hands away.

‘You know I do not despise you,’ she said.

She walked on without looking at him again, and Lewis as he followed her could not say another word.



## CHAPTER XXVIII

‘I MUST go home, Janie,’ said Dinah the next day, as she finished reading a letter from her father.

‘Oh, Dinah!’ exclaimed Jane Anne in dismay. A whole volume could not have conveyed more of what Dinah’s going would mean to her. Mr. Jer-ningham’s letter was short and peremptory. He had come home, he said, and he now wished Dinah to leave Glarn immediately and return to Ubster. He added that he had reasons for this command, which he would give to her on her return.

‘Reasons!’ said Dinah; ‘I wonder what they are? Papa’s reasons are always strong. I hope that there is nothing wrong at home.’

‘Must you really go? Can you leave us? What shall we do without you?’ said Jane Anne. She tried to persuade her to stay at least for a few days longer, but Dinah’s resolutions were generally final. She had made up her mind that she must leave as soon as she could.

‘I shall go to-morrow,’ she said, with a sad decision in her voice, and she began at once to make preparations for her departure.

She did not even look at Lewis ; and he, who had for a moment felt his heart stand still, made no effort to speak to her alone. She went about the house trying to arrange everything as far as she could, so as to give Jane Anne as little trouble as possible, comforting her, and assuring her that they would meet very soon in Ubster. She said something to her about coming again to live with them if Lewis had to go and work elsewhere, but Jane Anne replied to that with an energy that surprised the girl. 'I would rather starve, Dinah,' she said ; so Dinah contented herself instead by talking of the tiny house that she would take in Ubster. Phemie would be with her, and the child, and Lewis would come whenever he had a holiday, even if he could not live always with her ; she would be near them, and be amongst old friends. This prospect comforted Jane Anne a good deal, and she spoke quite hopefully of the new plan.

Lewis left them together talking of these things. He walked off restlessly towards the hills, following the tracks made by the sheep amongst the hummocks of heather until he came into the deep narrow valley between the great mountain and the ridge of rocky hills that faced it. It was a day of intense clear heat ; in the wonderful limpid atmosphere every twig on the low trees, every rock, stump, and tuft of heather was visible on the flank

of the mountain opposite to him. Looking up, the intolerable clearness of the sky made him feel suddenly as if God were looking down upon him, discerning every thought and intent of his heart as clearly as the light was searching every leaf and fibre in the sun-stricken glen. Down there he used to walk with Annie. Surely he had loved her? Had he not sworn to love her for ever, and thought that she had broken his heart? And now—Oh! it was a hopeless case—he could make no effort against the overwhelming force of the passion that had lain dormant in his heart for so long; he bowed his head and was content. He tried to remember how Annie once had seemed to be the only thing that he wanted in the world. But even the mere impression would not return; it was lost in what he now endured, as a candle is lost in the broad light of morning.

It was for him, then, the Day of Judgment. Ah! how all the thousand faults and follies of his former life rose up before him! How he had forgotten others in his selfishness! He remembered his father's last days; Jane Anne with her helplessness, her little anxieties; his own careless boyhood, his recklessness, his idleness, his wasted opportunities, his vain self-assurance; the blind madness of his love for Annie.

He passed it all in review, as it were, under Dinah's deep searching eyes; he buried his face in

the grass, and burned with shame as he thought of her. Why, why had he been so blind? Why had the memory of her as he saw her first not been sufficient to preserve him from this? Then little by little the noise of the whimpering burn mixed with his thoughts that loosened their hold on reality and went off into dreams.

The sense of some great disaster was upon him. He struggled with something heavy and intangible that he could not shake off. Then Dinah was standing beside him, and she looked at him full and straight. He saw her face, her white kind hands, her bright abundant hair.

‘Is there anything in life more precious than what I am giving up?’ he asked. ‘Yes’ (he thought), she answered, and looked at him long and steadily, ‘Honour.’

Lewis wakened with a start, and tried to shake off the evil oppression of the dream. But it hung about him, a nameless horror, a sense of approaching disaster that he could not account for, even by the thought that Dinah was leaving the next day.

He scarcely spoke to her all that evening. She and Jane Anne sat up till a late hour, discussing plans for the future. Lewis took scarcely any part in the conversation; he did not even care to hide his depression; but Dinah, who had looked sad enough in the morning, grew more cheerful,

and she smiled in his face as she bade him good-night.

He drove her to meet the coach the next morning, and both were very silent the whole way. As they parted, he tried to thank her for all that she had done for them. Dinah listened without replying. As he took her hand to say good-bye, he choked on the words, and could not utter them. When she had gone, and he turned homewards again, the same sense of disaster was upon him as on the night before. So oppressive was it, that he looked round the clear sky from east to west to see if there were any signs of a coming storm, but there was not even the shadow of a cloud to be seen.

## CHAPTER XXIX

THE evening on which Dinah returned to Ubster was dark and warm. It had been a day of great heat, though the sky was obscured by heavy clouds. All the windows in the house were open, so that sounds from the harbour and some faint freshness from the sea came into the shaded rooms.

Dinah, well accustomed to lukewarm greetings (Mrs. Jerningham never was effusive), could not but be struck by a constraint in her mother's manner when they met.

‘Are you well, mother?’ the girl asked.

Mrs. Jerningham had fidgeted about the room for some minutes, pulling up the blinds, and moving things on the table: she had scarcely asked her daughter a single question about her journey, about old Mr. Campbell's death, or as to how she had left Jane Anne. As Dinah spoke, she came up and stood before her, clasping and unclasping her hands. Dinah rose and laid a hand upon her shoulder.

‘What is the matter?’ she said. ‘What has happened? Is anything wrong? Papa told me

he had a reason for asking me to come home. What was it?' As her mother continued silent, she went on: 'Is papa angry about anything? Was he vexed because I stayed away so long? or has he been losing money?'

'No—no—at least, yes—you don't understand—I cannot explain—I must not speak about it—I told him you knew nothing.'

'What on earth do you mean?' said Dinah. Then she inquired, 'Is papa in the library?'

'I—I think so—I think I heard him say that he was coming in early—he does not know that you have come home—I am sure he'll be annoyed about Jane Anne; but, after all, she's a widow now, and ought to be able to live on very little.'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' said Dinah. She turned abruptly and left the room, walked downstairs, and crossed the hall. At the door of the office she met a clerk.

'Mr. Jerningham is engaged just now, Miss,' he said discreetly, seeing Dinah about to enter the library.

'Who is with him?' asked Dinah, and he named a lawyer in the town, a man she knew quite well. She opened the door and went in.

'Well, papa, I've come home,' she said. 'How do you do, Mr. Field?' She shook hands with the lawyer, and Mr. Jerningham gave her a hurried kiss.

‘Go away ; I am busy just now,’ he said.

‘I want to speak to you for a moment before you go out, papa. I’ve got a note for you from Lewis Campbell.’

Jerningham exchanged a quick glance with the other man. ‘From Lewis Campbell,’ he repeated slowly.

‘I have just returned from Ubster,’ said Dinah, in explanation to the lawyer, who had risen at her entrance, and stood awkwardly by the table.

Jerningham put his thumbs into the armholes of his waistcoat and opened his round eyes wide.

‘Don’t let me hear you mention the name of that confounded young villain again,’ he said. ‘Throw the note into the fire ; I don’t want his letter.’

‘What do you mean, papa ?’

‘Has your mother not told you ?’ he asked.

‘Told me what ? I have heard nothing.’

Mr. Field coughed, and held out his hand to say good-bye, evidently wishing to be gone, but Jerningham ignored his action.

‘Ah, well, I shall do so then. Your young friend has been making a fine thing of it lately. He’s just been going a little too far ; forged my name for fifty pounds. What do you say to that, Dinah ? Field has just been here to talk the matter over with me.’ He looked at her triumphantly. ‘Now, you’ve heard, go upstairs, and leave us.’



‘In a minute,’ Dinah answered. ‘I don’t think I quite understood you, papa. *Who* do you say has forged your name?’ She rested one hand on the table as she stood looking at the two men. While at Glarn she had got sunburnt, so that if her face was pale, it did not show. Her voice was clear and unshaken.

‘I said *Lewis Campbell*,’ said Jerningham. ‘And Mr. Field will say so too, and show you the evidence, if you like; he’s got it all there as clear as daylight.’

‘Oh, perhaps better not . . . young lady,’ murmured the lawyer. Jerningham sat unmoved, looking at his daughter.

Dinah turned to Mr. Field. ‘I should like, if you don’t mind,’ she said gravely, ‘to hear some of the reasons you have for making such an extraordinary charge.’

‘Ah, well,’ he said, hesitating, and looking to see if Mr. Jerningham wished him to proceed, ‘the fact is that the evidence is very simple. You have the forged cheque, taken from Mr. Jerningham’s cheque-book, which was presented at the bank in London, enclosed in a half-sheet of paper, which is of rather unusual texture, and which is always used in your father’s office.’

‘The money was given for the cheque?’

‘Yes, unfortunately, it was not till afterwards that it was suspected to be a forgery. The money

was given to a respectable-looking elderly woman, whom the police as yet have quite failed to trace.'

'And what in the world do you suppose that Lewis Campbell has to do with a respectable-looking elderly woman and a bank in London?'

Mr. Field smiled. He drew from his pocket a sheet of paper. It had been folded, and a bit was torn off the top of the sheet. 'Now,' he said, 'if you will look at this, Miss Jerningham, I think you will understand the case. The cheque was handed in enclosed in this half-sheet of paper, which had evidently been torn off a letter in a hurry. You will see on the edge of it the stamp of Mr. Jerningham's house, which, however, could not have betrayed who sent it; but also, by some strange oversight, the person who sent the cheque had not observed that your father had written at the foot of the page the date of the letter. It is in Mr. Jerningham's handwriting; and on turning up his books, you will see, if you choose, that the only letter he wrote on that day was "to Lewis Campbell."'

'Yes,' said Mr. Jerningham, 'I wrote to him to tell him that in future I would have no more to do with him. I sent him his salary, and told him I washed my hands of him.'

'That was after you quarrelled, I remember,' said Dinah. She turned again to Mr. Field. 'Please go on,' she said.

‘Oh,’ he answered, ‘it’s quite clear. The young man was in want of money, had been gambling in fact, and lost a good deal. He knew better than to try to draw the money in Ubster, so he asked some one whom he knew in London to do it for him, or else he sent the cheque by way of payment. He was in a hurry, probably greatly excited, and he enclosed the cheque in the first half-sheet of paper he could find.’

‘Is that likely?’

Mr. Field blinked.

‘Likely or not, it’s done, as you see,’ said her father shortly. ‘There can be no doubt about it. Well, what do you say, Dinah?’

Dinah took them both in with her full, steady glance, then she said in her usual deliberate manner, ‘Whatever proofs any one can bring forward, I shall always say the same thing.’

‘That it’s not true?’ said her father.

‘*That it is a most damnable lie,*’ said Miss Jerningham, and she walked quietly out of the room.

There was an instant of dead silence.

‘Tut, tut, tut!’ said Jerningham. He had got very red. The other man too had flushed, and stood awkwardly, not knowing how to take the thing.

At that time of day such words, on the lips of a young lady, were even more unheard of than they would be now; that a girl like Dinah Jerning-

ham could have uttered them was almost unbelievable.

Mr. Field already imagined himself retailing the anecdote to incredulous and astounded friends.

Jerningham's sensibilities, we know, were not delicate, but a blow had been struck at them quite in his own style, and it had taken effect. He was very deeply annoyed. He made an attempt to continue the conversation, but the lawyer presently took his leave, and before the street door had well closed behind him, was chuckling to himself at the remembrance of the scene.

'Where is Dinah?' Mr. Jerningham demanded, going up to the drawing-room.

His wife looked up in an agitated way at his tone; but Dinah demanded calmly, 'What is it, papa?'

He broke into a storm of abuse, first of Lewis Campbell, then of Dinah, of the way that she had spoken. 'Monstrous! Impossible! I was ashamed of you. No man ever heard of such a thing!'

'What has she done? What did she say?' asked her mother, who was nervous, and kept looking from the angry man to Dinah's unmoved face.

'Say!' cried Jerningham. 'She swore like a trooper—before Field too—he'll tell all the town.' He turned to Dinah, 'Never let me hear you mention that young blackguard's name in my hearing

again, Dinah. When he's got ten years' penal servitude for this, you'll perhaps see then who was in the right.'

'Who will pay for Jane Anne's keep *now*?' said Mrs. Jerningham in the pause which followed. Dinah had not spoken.

'Let her go to the workhouse,' said Jerningham, 'or to Timbuctoo. She shan't have a penny from me.'

'There was no unnecessary expense about the old man's funeral, anyhow; it was all done in the neighbourhood,' his wife went on. 'And Jane Anne wears very little crape, Dinah tells me. One good bonnet should last a quiet widow like her for years.'

Dinah had gone away. She stood now in her own room. She had clenched her hands so tightly, that her nails had left red marks on the palms. She smoothed them out, but from her face the traces of anger had not yet disappeared. Her thick eyebrows were drawn together in a frown as she knelt down and began, with her usual neatness and dispatch, to unpack the boxes that she had brought with her from Glarn.

## CHAPTER XXX

‘I! NO, I have heard nothing about Glarn since we left. I have been too anxious about my uncle,’ said Annie. She sat in the full light opposite to Lord Glarn, but her face did not change at all as he told her about Lewis.

‘It is monstrous! extravagant! I never heard of anything so horrible. I am going to Ubster at once. I have some influence there, and I may be able to do something. I don’t believe that even Mr. Jerningham believes a word of it; but they had a quarrel, and so he has chosen to fasten this ridiculous charge upon Campbell.’

‘When will you go?’ Annie asked.

‘At once, as soon as I possibly can of course.’

‘Ah!’ said Annie, with a little sigh.

‘You are sorry?’ he inquired anxiously.

She shook her head. ‘I meant, I hoped you would not go away just yet, we are so lonely here, and uncle is so ill. I—— Oh, but it is better that you should go.’ She watched him through her eyelashes, noting the effect of her words.

He rose and walked two or three times up and

down the room, then came and leaned on the back of her chair. 'I must go, my dear, I must ; I would do anything else in the world to please you, but I can't stand this.' Annie moved her head an inch till she rested her smooth cheek against his hand. 'You see,' he went on, 'I feel as if I owed Campbell something,' he looked down at her with the expression she disliked, because she did not understand what he meant by it. 'I do not for a moment suggest that *you* have done anything that is not quite honourable. I take the whole blame in the matter. I did it with my eyes open. I would do it again to-morrow. It would have ruined both your life and his if you had gone off together, as you meant to do ; but——' he paused, 'there are two sides to every question, and taking everything into consideration, I am not going to let him go to prison on a false charge if I can help it. I'll pay his counsel, if he'll let me, and get the best in Scotland. I'll go bail for him anyway, at once.'

'If it *is* a false charge,' murmured Annie.

He dropped her hand, which he had taken in his, as if it had been red hot ; then, as if annoyed by the violence of the action, he moved very gently away from her. 'What were we saying ? Ah, good-night ; I shall see you when I return from Ubster.' He stood at the door for a moment and looked back.

‘ You have no message for Lewis, I presume ? ’

‘ What could I say ? ’ said Annie.

She sat for a long time thinking after he had gone. ‘ I wish I hadn’t done it ! I wish I hadn’t done it ! ’ she said to herself. ‘ How could I have known though ? ’ She took up the little desk from the table and went carefully over its contents, burning several of them ; some bills from her dressmaker ; some of Lewis’s old love letters ; finally, a note from Vere, which she read with a sudden smile before she saw it shrivel up.

It had begun to grow dark before she was aware. When at last she raised her head and looked about the room, the corners were hidden by the dusk. Annie had the most intense dislike to the dark ; it was with a trembling all through her, and sidelong glances at the dusky end of the room, that she made her way to the bell to ring for lights. She gave a shuddering sigh of relief when the door opened and the landlady came in. She took up one of the candles and carried it into her uncle’s room.

‘ Ah, you have come at last, Annie,’ he said faintly. ‘ I am thirsty. Lord Glarn stayed a long time.’

‘ No, not very long.’

‘ Why does he come here so often, child ? ’

‘ To inquire for you, uncle,’ she answered.

‘ He is very kind. I wish you had brought him



in. He has a sweet voice and a cool hand. I like to feel him near.'

Annie gave him a spoonful of some soup, and sat down negligently by the side of the bed.

'Have you not heard from Lewis yet, Annie?'

'No, uncle; he has never written.'

'Ah, poor lad! He would have much to burden him after his father's death.'

'Yes, a great deal.'

After a silence he stretched out his hand, feeling for hers. 'You've not been like yourself of late, Annie. I fear you are not happy. What will you do when I am gone, child?'

Annie answered sweetly, 'I think I shall go into a convent, uncle. The Reverend Mother wants me to come to them.'

## CHAPTER XXXI

As Mr. Jerningham came out of the Court House, he was delayed on all sides by questions of sympathisers. He answered shortly, with the air of a man who knew he was expected to show triumph, but had determined to behave with magnanimity. The whole of Ubster was greatly excited over the trial.

‘He hasn’t a chance. He didn’t offer even a figment of a defence,’ said Jerningham, when he reached home. His wife had besieged him with futile questions.

Dinah had never asked him a single word about it on either day. She sat sewing with her head bent, as if she were deaf and heard nothing, as her father explained how Lewis had been asked if he could in any way account for the fact of the cheque having been enclosed in a letter belonging to him.

‘I have no explanation to offer,’ had been his only reply.

‘I should think he had not,’ said Jerningham, laughing as he repeated this.

Since the day when she had so astonished Mr.

Field and her father, Lewis Campbell's name had never crossed Dinah's lips, nor did she appear to take the slightest interest in the whole affair. She rose now in the middle of her father's speech and folded up her work.

'Where are you going to, Dinah?'

'I'm going to see Janie,' she answered, without a change of voice.

Mrs. Jerningham looked flustered.

'Tell her then,' said her father, 'that as soon as this business is at an end, I'll take her here. I'll give her house room again.'

'She'll have enough, I daresay, to provide her own clothes,' said Mrs. Jerningham, adding, 'The child won't cost much for a year or two, and, of course, she will not have to give anything to Lewis there.'

'Where?' said Dinah, slightly knitting her brows.

'In prison!' said Jerningham, with a chuckle.

'I shall give her your message,' answered the girl, and her father's smile subsided suddenly as she looked at him.

'Lewis will be in the house—he's out on bail—so I suppose he'll be still with Jane Anne,' said Mrs. Jerningham. But Jerningham did not answer. He looked very black, but he did not forbid Dinah to go to see her cousin, as his wife had expected. The truth was that he now knew by

experience that whenever Dinah's will and his came into collision, it was not the girl who was worsted.

Dinah arrived at the small house where Jane Anne had taken up a temporary residence, and was received by Phemie, who opened the door to her without a word. The old woman had become devoted to Dinah during her stay at Glarn ; but the name of Jerningham was now hateful to her, and she struggled between her admiration of the girl and her loyalty to Lewis.

Dinah had to wait for some minutes before her cousin appeared. She turned to greet her as the door opened, but she had only time to give one glance at her pitiful, tear-sodden face before she saw that Lewis was behind her. His mouth was set, his eyes fixed on Dinah as he stood in the doorway. Dinah held out her arms to Jane Anne, who sank into them sobbing ; she did not even hold out her hand to Lewis, but drew her cousin to the sofa ; there she sat down by her, and let her hide her face on her breast, and cry as much as she liked. Lewis, standing grimly looking on, envied his stepmother.

‘ Yes, yes, Janie, you do not need to tell me anything. My poor Janie, my dear, my dear.’

Dinah went on murmuring soft words to her, patting her and soothing her as if she had been a child. Still she never spoke to Lewis, nor he to

her. He stood looking down at them, until at last Jane Anne's sobs grew less piteous, and she drew breath more calmly, then he said to her—

‘I am not worth all this, mammy. Ask Dinah.’

At this Jane Anne raised herself and wiped her eyes, still clinging to Dinah, as a child clings to its mother. She looked from one to the other of them.

‘I don't know what you mean, Lewis,’ she said.

Then, looking at Dinah, she exclaimed suddenly, ‘Oh, Dinah, you do love him, don't you, my dear?’ and the next instant, becoming aware of her indiscreet words, her distraction increased. She murmured something about hearing the child crying, and rising in great confusion, she fairly fled from the room.

After the door had closed behind her, the silence lasted unbroken for two or three seconds. Then Lewis laughed, a laugh that was curiously out of place.

‘Poor mammy!’ he said, and stood again silent.

‘Are you coming to the Court-house to-morrow, Miss Jerningham?’ he asked at length.

‘No.’

‘It will go against me, I expect.’

‘I know that.’

‘Yet you will not come to see the——’ he hesitated for a moment, ‘the last of me.’

‘No.’

‘You will take care of Janie and the child ; look after them somehow when . . . I am away.’

‘Yes, I will.’

‘May I ask you one other favour, Dinah ?’

Dinah sat on the sofa hanging her head. She nodded without speaking. He saw that she twisted her hands, her white, kind hands, together on her knee as if she would break one with the other, but she never looked up.

‘You will not forget altogether ? You will remember me sometimes ?’ He paused, waiting for her to speak.

She answered slowly, without looking up—

*‘Every hour of the day ; every hour of the night ; wherever I am—in my dreams—in my grave even, if I am there before you.’*

He held out his hand. ‘Good-bye, then.’

‘Good-bye.’

‘Won’t you look at me, Dinah ?’

‘I can’t,’ she said, turning her head away.

‘I do not need to tell you anything ?’ he asked.

‘Nothing.’

‘Very well then, good-bye.’

‘Good-bye,’ repeated Dinah, without looking at him, and he went away.

## CHAPTER XXXII

‘ So that is all,’ said Lord Glarn. ‘ I can do nothing more for you.’

‘ Nothing, thank you.’

He sat looking at Lewis as if uncertain whether to add something more or not. The jail at Ubster was very rarely used, and the little room in which they sat was damp and very chill. The white-washed walls were streaked with green lines where the damp had trickled down them : the small window that looked out on the market-place was ostentatiously guarded with iron bars : the floor was laid with bricks. The furniture consisted of a bed, a table, and one chair, covered with mouldering haircloth. Lewis had given this seat to his visitor, and he sat on the corner of the table in a boyish attitude that contrasted oddly with the deep lines that were already marked upon his face.

‘ I’m more sorry than I can say, Campbell,’ continued the Marquis. ‘ It was an extraordinary thing, the whole affair. This hasty sentence is absurd. Could you not have at least attempted a defence ? ’

Lewis shook his head.

‘Come, tell me,’ continued Lord Glarn, addressing him in just the winning way he used to speak to him when Lewis was a boy; ‘come, tell me, Lewis. I’ve an idea somehow that you know something about this that you have not told.’

Lewis’s face grew hard.

‘Have you no notion at all who it was that did it?’

Lewis answered nothing.

‘Do you know how that letter of Jerningham’s came into another person’s possession?’

Lewis raised his head. ‘If I do,’ he said, ‘I do not choose to tell—either you or any one else, my lord.’

‘Well, well, all right, I am sorry I asked,’ said the Marquis. ‘Only,’ he added, ‘I say to you now, as I think I once said to you before, that it’s not easy, and not always very wise to hide anything in this world.’

‘I am not good at concealing anything,’ said Lewis, ‘but I can always be silent at least.’

‘What are you going to do when you come back after this—it is a short sentence?’

‘I shall not come back,’ said Lewis, setting his teeth.

‘No? Well, perhaps you are right. May I inquire what you mean to do?’



‘Go to the war and try to get killed,’ he answered.

The Marquis rose to go. ‘I have something to tell you, Campbell,’ he said; ‘I do not know how you will take it. I thought I should prefer to tell you myself rather than let you hear it later on.’ He paused; Lewis nodded to signify his attention. The muscles about his mouth were working strangely. Lord Glarn blushed a little, faintly, like a timid girl, as he spoke with his eyes cast down: ‘Since I last saw you—since she came to London—Annie Fraser has promised to marry me.’

He looked up suddenly, startled by the peal of laughter that rang through the room.

He stood still, frowning, but Lewis stopped laughing and held out his hand.

‘Forgive me, sir, I am very rude. I was amused—at something I remembered.’

He stood with his hand stretched out; Glarn hesitated, then turned away without taking it.

‘Better not,’ he said; ‘I won’t ask you what you mean. Good-bye, Campbell.’ He looked at him again, adding, with the sudden catching of his breath that was his way of showing feeling, ‘There are worse things, believe me, than being unjustly accused; worse things even than being unjustly condemned. It’s a short sentence after all; perhaps we’ll meet again.’

He turned away with his downcast, pale face, but Lewis sprang after him.

'Oh,' he called eagerly, 'don't go like this!' and would have detained him, but Glarn drew himself away, and would not look at him again.

He followed the turnkey along the narrow, whitewashed passages that rang to their steps, coming out into the sunshine in the street, without noticing the salutations of the men who touched their caps to him.

He was driving himself, without a groom, and went quickly through the town, across the broad market-place with its groups of lounging country people, who stared at him as he passed, then out along the hard, white road that ran by the edges of the cliff.

As he drove past the grim walls of Miss Macneil's Establishment, he looked up at the windows, causing quite a flutter in the heads of two or three of a new generation of schoolgirls who were at their lessons in the bleak rooms.

It was but a mile beyond that where the road curved sharply round the little bay, under whose steep cliffs the boat had been broken up that night.

It was a fresh morning ; the waves danced below, and the wind that blew gently from the east was laden with that indescribable breath and savour of the sea which has the power to stir some people as nothing else can do. Lord Glarn stopped

and looked down, then looked up to the sky, then looked out to sea, as if he pondered in his mind an idea that was familiar to him, and not disagreeable. But after a minute he drew himself up briskly.

‘Not yet, not yet,’ he muttered, ‘some other time perhaps ; it is an extreme remedy,’ and he drove on to Glarn.)

## CHAPTER XXXIII

A WEEK later, wearied and impatient, for time hung heavy on his hands just then, Lord Glarn came back to London and went at once to see Annie.

The people within were long in answering his knock, and he began to wonder if the old man was worse—was dead—and to think of what Annie would do left alone in the world, until he had a right to protect her. When the door was opened at last, he thought that the landlady looked at him curiously as she told him that Miss Fraser was not at home.

‘ Ah ! then Father Fraser is better, I suppose. I am very glad to hear it. I shall come in and see him.’

The woman admitted him, and closed the door again before she answered.

She was of very ordinary type, a plump, middle-aged woman, with tightened lips and hard eyes, but on the whole looked neither dishonest nor unkindly. He was struck by the mystery in her manner as she showed him in to the parlour and closed the door.

‘My lord,’ she said in a low voice, with a glance to make sure that the door of the adjoining room was shut, ‘you need not wait for Miss Fraser. She will not be home till eleven o’clock. She has gone out to dine somewhere . . . with a gentleman.’

The Marquis did not know of any man of Annie’s acquaintance likely to have taken her out to dine anywhere ; but, after all, she might have a dozen such acquaintances that he knew nothing about. He nodded impatiently as he moved to the door.

‘Very well ; I certainly cannot wait till she comes in then ; but as Father Fraser is better, I shall go into his room for a little.’

‘Father Fraser is *not* better, sir, but much worse these last two days. I took in a letter to him an hour ago, and I thought that he seemed scarcely himself.’

‘But I understood you to say that Miss Fraser had gone out ?’

‘Miss Fraser has gone out to dine with a gentleman,’ the woman repeated.

‘They have a nurse for him then ?’

‘No ; no nurse.’

She screwed up her mouth and looked at him as if she were uncertain whether to proceed with speech or not, then added, ‘No nurse ; not much nursing either, sir. I’ve an idea that them dress-

ings ought to have been changed this evening, but I shan't be the one to do it, lest he die in my 'ands. I will have no responsibility with any one in my 'ouse—daren't do it—but I look in from time to time, as I'm able, in case 'e should be slip-pin' away. It's not that they're ill off either, sir, for Miss sent me to get a cheque cashed for her not so long ago—at Edwards, for fifty pounds—so that would pay a nurse surely !'

'I shall go in and see him, then,' said Lord Glarn, when at last she drew breath.

The woman opened the bedroom door, and he entered, motioning to her to leave him alone.

As she went away she looked keenly at his face, but it expressed nothing.

A screen hid the bed from the doorway. Lord Glarn stepped gently in and stood looking about him. The room was hot, close, and very untidy ; dust lay thick on the furniture. The blind was pulled askew, so that the evening light fell in, streaming across the tumbled bed, where the old man lay in an uneasy sleep. His head was damp with sweat, and was bound round with a handkerchief ; his shirt was open at the throat, and his face was yellow, with drawn lips and blind, ghastly eyes. His arms were thrown out on the coverlid, and he moved painfully and groaned, as if he suffered in his sleep.

Lord Glarn stood still, looking round and round

the room, noting everything ; the ashes of yesterday's fire in the grate ; a bottle of medicine marked '*Every two hours*' on the table. ('She will not be here till eleven,' he thought.) A small jug of milk stood beside it. He poured some into a cup and tasted it ; it was sour. He looked at his watch—it was eight o'clock—then he sat down by the side of the bed.

Presently the blind man turned and threw out his hands with a sigh.

'There is some one in the room ; is it you at last, Annie ?' he said.

'Do you know me, sir ? Can I do anything for you ?' the Marquis asked eagerly ; but Father Fraser's mind was wandering, and he scarcely heard.

Again he beat with his hands on the quilt.

'Annie, dear ; Annie ! Annie ! Don't you hear ? I am very tired now. Could you put on a fresh bandage ? Ah ! you are going out. Very well, very well, I can wait.'

He wiped his damp face with one trembling hand, and murmured on, 'Another hour ! another hour or two,' then awaking and recovering consciousness, he asked diffidently—

'Is it you, Mrs. Willis ? Would you move me a little on my right side ? I am very tired. Will Miss Fraser soon be in ? I should be glad to have another bandage put on now.'

‘It is not the landlady ; it is I—Glarn ; Annie will be in soon, sir. Will you allow me to try to make you more comfortable ?’

Father Fraser smiled and shook his head, stroking the young man’s hand feebly with his own.

‘No, no ; you must not trouble ; I must have patience.’

Lord Glarn summoned the landlady again.

‘Show me where those dressings are kept,’ he said, ‘and bring a light here, and I will try to make him more comfortable.’

‘Well, sir,’ she began, ‘I’m not liking to take the responsibility,’ but he cut short her answer and bade her do what he told her. The old man’s mind had wandered again, and he thought that Lord Glarn was the doctor. He was not very skilful, but his hands were deft and gentle, and before long he had made Father Fraser much more comfortable. He gave him the medicine, laid him back on the pillows, and in a few minutes the old man had dropped asleep, breathing more quietly.

The Marquis went to the window to draw down the blind. As he did so, he noticed the birdcage hanging there ; and remembering how Annie used to cover it up, to prevent the bird from singing, fearing the candlelight might startle it, and that it would awaken the old man, he looked about for something to throw over it. The bird was not visible, so he glanced inside the cage ; on the



floor the tiny creature was lying on its back, dead. He examined the little dishes that hung at the sides of the cage ; they were empty ; there was neither seed nor water.

He stood for a moment or two looking down at the dead bird, then went back, and sat down again by the bed.

After a little the sick man wakened and stretched out his hand.

‘ Ah ! it is you, Lord Glarn ! Are you still here ? I have been asleep.’

‘ Yes ; I shall stay with you till Annie comes in. Can I do anything for you, sir ?’

The blind man feebly stretched out his arm and began fumbling under the pillow. At last he drew out a letter. The envelope had already been opened, and he took out the letter and held it towards the Marquis.

‘ Is there light enough for you to see ? ’ he said. ‘ I think so ; I feel the light on the table there. Will you read this to me, my lord ? ’

‘ Oh, I think you are scarcely able to attend to letters to-night,’ said Lord Glarn, who seeing that his mind was still slightly wandering, hesitated, fearing to excite him.

‘ It is a letter from my Bishop ; I want to know what he says. I shall be much obliged if you can read it to me.’

‘ If I can make it out, sir, but the light is

dim,' Lord Glarn answered, trying to make an excuse.

He thought he would read the thing through to himself first, in order to make sure that there was nothing in it which could agitate the old man.

He read the first lines without realising what it was ; it began without address.

'I am writing to you to-night to let you know that as far as I am concerned your secret is safe. I have neither tried to discover, nor do I care to know why you did this thing. I have taken the punishment, because I, at least, do not forget that we were lovers once, and because I promised you long ago that I would never tell any one about our relations to one another. Let me advise you though, before you marry Lord Glarn, to make sure that you have destroyed a contract of marriage that you were once going to sign with me.'

The letter ended without a signature, but it was dated underneath 'Ubster, 8th September.' Lord Glarn read it twice over. He looked at it again and again ; then he took up the envelope that lay on the bed. It was addressed to Annie. He bent forwards.

'This is a letter which you have opened by mistake, sir,' he said to the old man. 'It is not for you ; it is a letter of Annie's.'

'Ah ! I have made a mistake then. Is it of any importance ?'

‘It is from a young friend,’ said the Marquis.

He took the letter and replaced it in its envelope, and moved the light so that it should not fall across the pillows, and resumed his watch by the bed. Father Fraser soon dozed off again. The young man sat on for another hour, watching him in silence, the candle from behind throwing a faint light on his inscrutable, melancholy face.

‘*A blind witness,*’ he thought, looking at the poor head on the pillow, with its sunken, sightless eyes.

The clock struck nine—ten—still Lord Glarn never moved, except to shift the old man into an easier position, or to bend over him to see if he still slept.

At last, shortly after eleven o’clock, there was a sound of voices in the hall, the door of the adjoining room opened, and he heard Annie exclaim, ‘Come in ; just wait for a minute whilst I look in and see if my uncle is asleep !’

She turned the handle of the door softly, and stepping forwards, looked round the screen. She had on a cloak lined with pale blue, and the hood of it had flattened her hair down on her forehead, framing her little face very tenderly.

In the dim light she did not at first perceive Lord Glarn as he sat quite still. When she did, she gave a little cry, as if she had seen a ghost. In an instant, however, she recovered her compo-

sure, threw a swift glance over her shoulder towards the half-open door, then came forward, holding her finger to her lip to signify that he was not to waken her uncle. He drew his arm from under the old man's head and took her hand ; it was cold and trembling. He looked at her and explained his visit.

Again, as she listened, Annie threw a backward glance at the door. She drew her hand away.

'Uncle is asleep,' she said, looking at him with flickering eyelids.

'Yes ; he seems to require little attention.'

She looked at him quickly, trying to catch his meaning.

'Oh ! he is asleep a great part of the time,' she said evasively.

'*Your bird is asleep too,*' said the Marquis.

Annie smiled, relieved. She walked up to the cage, looked into it, and threw a handkerchief over it.

'Yes ; he always is by this time,' she answered serenely.

'Shall we come into the other room ?' he asked.

Annie turned swiftly, as if she had forgotten something.

'Oh, yes,' she said ; 'wait a moment,' and she slipped out, closing the door behind her.

He heard her in a low voice saying something to the person in the next room.

When she came back, he said, 'I shall not stay longer to-night. I shall come and see you to-morrow. I have something to say to you.'

He had placed the letter again under her uncle's pillow.

On her first entrance she had been too much surprised by seeing him to notice it at all.

'I am sorry that I did not know you were coming, or I should have come home earlier,' she said.

He did not answer, but followed her silently into the sitting-room.

'Your friend has gone?' he said, looking at her, smiling.

Annie seemed for her strangely agitated. She stood under the gas lamp by the table twisting her fingers together.

'Ah! he is coming back; he has forgotten something,' said the Marquis, hearing a step in the hall.

Annie started, and then threw out her two hands with a little gesture of abandonment, for it was too late; the door opened, and a man stood on the threshold. He began to say, 'I had forgotten to say, Annie——' when he saw the Marquis, and stood still in astonishment. It was his cousin Vere.

They looked at one another for a moment in silence, and then Lord Glarn suddenly stepped forward.

‘I shall bid you good-night,’ he said. ‘Good-night, Vere ; I scarcely expected to see you here.’

The door closed behind him : he walked up the quiet street in the warm night air, and lifting his head, he suddenly laughed aloud, just as Lewis Campbell had laughed when they sat in the jail at Ubster.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

‘DEATH is the great consoler,’ said the Marquis ; his pale face quivered for a moment with a smile, but Annie did not see. She sat with downcast eyes, her hands folded on her lap, a touching little figure of grief.

‘Yes,’ she assented with a sigh, as if she had deeply understood the remark.

‘Your uncle’s death was very sudden at the end,’ he went on. ‘You cannot have expected it last night.’

‘No, indeed ; I had hoped that he might have lingered on for a long time.’

‘But you must not grieve too much,’ he said ; ‘your uncle has much the best of it now.’

‘He is with the saints in Paradise,’ said Annie. Then she turned with a quick movement, as if she brushed aside the subject. ‘You look ill,’ she said. ‘You are worn out. You are miserable !’

‘That, unfortunately, is nothing new,’ he said. ‘But you are right : I am ; much more miserable even than I used to be.’

Annie softly laid her hand on his. He looked

at it curiously as if it were something strange, and then let it drop.

‘I am going away from this country,’ he said, ‘for a long time’ (he caught his breath sobbingly as he spoke), ‘and possibly I may not return.’ Annie looked at him in surprise. ‘I have something to say to you before I go.’

The event of her uncle’s death (it had occurred rather suddenly in the middle of the previous night after Vere and Lord Glarn had gone) had driven the remembrance of Lewis’s letter from her mind at the time. She had read it before she went to bed, but had not thought of it again. Now she looked at the Marquis, wondering what he was going to say.

‘Your uncle asked me to read a letter to him last night as I sat beside him,’ he proceeded slowly. It suddenly flashed upon Annie what he meant. She rose from her chair as if to gain assurance by standing up. Lord Glarn rose too, so that they stood face to face.

‘The letter was one addressed to you,’ he said. ‘But I did not see the envelope, which your uncle had opened before I came in, so that I read it unwittingly at first; then I saw who it was from, and what it was about. I understand it all. However, it is not my affair. If Lewis Campbell chooses to go to prison on your account, it is not my place to denounce you. He was generous



enough, if I remember the words, to say that he did not forget that you and he had been lovers ; neither shall I forget that you and I have been so also.' He looked down at her little fair head. There in that very room, not so long ago, he had knelt at her feet, and blind and trembling with passion, had laid his head on her knee. He remembered it as he looked at her.

'You do not love me any longer then ?' said Annie, looking suddenly up into his face with her brilliant eyes.

'I ! love you ! No, I do not love you.' He paused, and stood looking at her for a moment—then went on : 'I have seen what I believed to be fair turn into something—for which I would rather not find a word even in your presence. I saw you break your faith with another man, and I half believed that you would be faithful to me. I saw you neglect that poor, helpless, old man who was left under your care, and saw you sicken at the sight of suffering which you did nothing to lessen. I did not need to find out at last that you had been guilty of other things—worse even than that. I do not love you,' he caught his breath again, 'I loathe you as I never loathed anything on earth before—not even my own most miserable life. I hate and despise you ; but more—Ah ! how much more !—I hate and despise myself.'

All the time that he had been speaking Annie had not stirred.

‘Then you are going away?’ she asked, and as he turned to leave the room, ‘I always liked Lewis much the best. Poor Lewis!’ she said softly, with the artless candour of a child.

Lord Glarn left the house and walked slowly up the narrow, silent street, one side of which was darkened by the shadow from the convent wall; the other was white with sunshine. He kept to the sunny side, but he shivered like a man that has been chilled through.

‘So this is the end,’ he said to himself. ‘And I deserve it. I was not young and hot-headed like Campbell. From the first I thought that I had matched myself evenly, for I half saw through her all the time. I’m a miserable fool.’ He walked on in the sunshine with his head bent, scarcely looking before him. ‘It is time to do it now; at least, I need not see the sun rise to-morrow.’

As he drew near the head of the lane, there came a sound of marching feet, and the silent little alley was filled all of a sudden with a burst of military music and the suffocating roll of drums.

He stood aside and waited as the regiment filed by him along the main street, scattering the people, all intent on their separate errands, and making them pause as it went on its way—hundreds

united with the purpose of one. He thought as he watched them of the fate to which they were going, forgetting for a moment his own misery. As the traffic rushed on again, and the sound of the drums grew faint in the distance, he followed slowly. 'What, after all,' he thought, 'is the little speck of my despair about which I have made so much ado

“ While to my shame I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men :  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
Go to their graves like beds ; fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause.” ’

He stopped short, staring at the line of scarlet now disappearing from his view.

‘ We ’ll try it that way,’ he exclaimed suddenly. ‘ It will perhaps be less ignoble than the other, and the end is the same in both.’

He left London that evening. Two days afterwards the papers contained the news of ‘ a fatal accident to the Marquis of Glarn,’ relating how ‘ the deceased nobleman ’ had gone out alone in a small boat, which must have been capsized by a sudden squall. The paragraph ended with, ‘ The body has not yet been recovered, and it is thought that it must have been carried out to sea.’

But on the very day that this announcement was published, a man with a pale face walked up to a recruiting sergeant in one of the inns in the

suburbs, boldly demanding the Queen's shilling. In spite of his clothing, which was notably poverty-stricken, there was something about his manner that made the request surprising. Men, however, were urgently wanted, and that was no objection.

'Your name?' asked the sergeant.

'Grant,' replied the other.

'Christian name?'

The man hesitated for an instant, then with a smile he began—

'John Edward Augustus Rich——'

'That 'll do—one's enough,' said the sergeant, and entered him as John Grant.

Annie, of course, read the sad news of the death of Lord Glarn along with the rest of the world. So did the new recruit who had joined Her Majesty's forces. There was a sentence at the close which both of them read with the same idea in their minds—

'The Marquis is succeeded by his cousin.'

## CHAPTER XXXV

AFTER Lewis had gone to prison, Mr. Jerningham had one day come to see his niece. He had never seen her since her marriage, and felt confident that he was about to behave in a very magnanimous way. She came into the room alone and greeted him coldly.

‘Hullo! is this you, Jane Anne? I should have known you anywhere. You’re not changed at all, although you’re a widow now instead of an old maid. Where’s your baby?’ he said genially. He then affably proceeded to state the object of his visit, which was to offer her a home in his house in the future, subject, as he carefully explained, to her paying such small board as she was able for herself and the child. ‘It will be a mere nothing, of course, but it will help to give you a feeling of independence,’ he added, as his niece kept silence.

No one was present at the interview, and Jerningham never alluded to it again; but he left the house after a few minutes, walking with a flushed face and an unsteady step, and from that time on-

wards he was never heard to mention Jane Anne's name. She never told either, even to Dinah, what she had said to him, and no further suggestion as to her coming again to live with them was ever made. Mrs. Jerningham continued to speak of her niece as usual ; Dinah went to see her nearly every day.

She had taken a tiny house not very far from the Jerninghams. Phemie, who formerly used to treat her with lofty contempt, now refused to hear of being parted from her, and spoke of her to others with exaggerated respect.

At first Mrs. Campbell used to speak of Lewis to Dinah as they sat together ; but as time went on, his name became between them like the names of the dead. At first when they leave us we speak of them continually, almost as if they were about to return ; but as time goes on, and the meaning of the long separation sinks upon our hearts, we speak of them less and less, until, at last, unless for some special reason, we mention them no more. So it was between Dinah and Jane Anne. At first, even for a month or two, they would speak of Lewis without restraint ; Jane Anne would read with tears his last letter to her ; they even talked about his life in prison, his hours, his labour, his release ; then they spoke about him less frequently ; then there were months of a sad silence when Dinah would come in and sit, and they

would talk all round the subject, but would never mention his name.

Miss Jerningham went about as usual. 'She is losing her looks,' the townspeople remarked, and she had indeed lost the look of youth. She entertained her parents' company ; she executed all her small home and social duties with just the same calm exactness as before. It was, of course, reported that she had rejected numberless suitors (such a report is always prevalent about a girl who will be an heiress), but in her case the assertion was quite untrue. There was an unapproachable, stony indifference in her manner that awed the fortune-hunters and made the men who did really care for her despair. Jerningham, who perhaps felt some chagrin at this state of matters, would not even allow to himself what might probably be the cause of it. When at last, nearly a year after Lewis had gone to prison, an eligible suitor in the person of young Van der Hulst, the heir of the other half of the riches of his firm, did present himself, Dinah listened impassively to all that her father had to say in the young man's favour, and merely remarked at the end of it, as if the question did not require an instant's consideration—

'It is perfectly impossible, papa. I should never dream of marrying Mr. Van der Hulst.'

'Why not?' Jerningham broke out irritably. 'I should like to know, why not ; you 'll say you

don't love him, or some nonsense of that sort, I suppose ?'

' I do not ; but that is not my only reason.'

' What on earth *is* it then ?' he demanded.

' I do not choose to tell you, papa.'

' Why not, pray ?'

' Because you would not understand,' said Dinah.

' I understand that you are a perfect fool !' he said, turning sharply away, and there was an end of the matter.

So with her unbecoming gravity, she went about as usual, and, heiress though she was, was not persecuted by any more suitors.

Jane Anne heard about the thing only by accident from her aunt, who had been much annoyed.

' I'm sure I don't know why Dinah wouldn't have him, he's got money and everything, and I'm sure he's just the sort of man that any girl ought to be able to fancy herself in love with—if that's all she wants,' complained Mrs. Jerningham, whose ideas on this subject were pliant.

Jane Anne ventured very timidly to allude to this to Dinah one day some time afterwards. She looked at the girl curiously as she spoke ; for to her mind a proposal of marriage from any one was a solemn and awful event in life ; it had been so in her own career, and she marvelled as she saw that Dinah was not troubled by the very slightest



emotion upon the subject. She spoke of Mr. Vander Hulst as she might have spoken of a pattern of some dress material that she had rejected.

‘Don’t you think you will ever marry, dear?’ Jane Anne asked wistfully. Dinah made no reply. They were sitting together by the fire in the twilight, and the child was playing on the rug. As Jane Anne spoke, Dinah stooped and lifted Tomasina on to her lap, and hid her face in the child’s hair, and Jane Anne too became silent and confused. ‘You are cold, Dinah, you are shivering,’ she said at length, when Dinah had risen to go, and was standing with her hand in hers.

‘No, no, it is nothing, I am not cold,’ said Dinah, turning to look down at her with her sad eyes.

Jane Anne flushed, then grew pale, then looked up pleadingly at the girl, as if she expected her to be angry for speaking. ‘I have had a letter from Lewis,’ she murmured. As Dinah did not speak, she added, ‘He has got—his sentence came to an end last week—I had thought, had almost hoped that he would have come back to me—to us, Dinah—but I see from this letter that that can never be. He says dreadful things. He speaks of disgrace. He tells me that he has enlisted as a soldier—as a soldier—and, oh! Dinah! Dinah! he will never come back, I know——’ and laying her head on Dinah’s arm, she clung to her weeping.

‘ Did he send no message to me, Janie ? ’ asked the girl. Jane Anne fumbled in her pocket for the letter, and pointed to a line written at the end of it, ‘ *Tell Dinah to forget me now.* ’ ‘ Is that all ? ’ said Dinah. Jane Anne looked up, astonished by her proud smile.

Dinah went home and sat down to read the newspapers that contained accounts of the war ; and the next day, and the next, and through all the months that followed, she read, with an unmoved face, all the worst of it. Rumours of the sufferings of the men, of cold and sickness, bad food, and everything else, were circulated freely. Dinah heard them all, and she remembered everything, but she never spoke to Jane Anne about him any more.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

It was cold that night at Ubster as Dinah walked home, but colder far under the grey sky at Inkermann, where the British troops were freezing, ill-clad, and hungry.

Two men had been crouching side by side in one of the trenches for an hour, without exchanging a word. The firing at last was directed to the left of them, only a stray shot came spitting now and then against the barrier behind which they lay. At last the younger of the two raised himself to look about him. He was so thin, that his bones seemed huge, and his whole body a mere skeleton; his cheeks were sunken, and only the lines of his throat, and the still graceful carriage of his head, remained of Lewis Campbell as he used to be.

The other man was watching him closely; but as Lewis turned towards him, he pulled his cap over his eyes, and let his head sink back on his arms.

Lewis had a newspaper (an old one by several weeks) in his pocket: as the firing lessened, he

unfolded it and began to read. Suddenly he stopped short and burst out laughing.

‘You’re merry,’ said his companion in a low voice, without lifting his head. ‘What’s the joke?’

‘Nothing much,’ said Lewis. ‘It’s a Scotch paper,’ he remarked; and after a minute or two he handed it to the other, who glanced his eyes quickly over the column, and then laid his finger on one paragraph. It was the announcement of the marriage of the Marquis of Glarn to Miss Annie Fraser, etc. etc.

He leant over and looked up at Lewis. ‘This is what amused you, I fancy,’ he said. ‘I read it some time ago.’ He lifted his cap off his head as he spoke. The fine drizzling rain that was falling quickly powdered his hair with dew; his ragged shirt and coat were already soaked. He raised his pale face to Lewis. ‘Don’t you know me, Campbell?’ he inquired. ‘You laughed like that the last time we met at Ubster.’

Lewis stared incredulous. ‘Good Lord!’ he exclaimed, ‘am I mad at last?’

Lord Glarn laid a hand upon his. ‘Feel it,’ he said, ‘flesh and bones—mostly bones—you see. Come, I’ll tell you all about it; only draw closer, in case we should be overheard.’

He turned again on his side, leaning on one elbow, holding his cap in the other hand, indiffer-

ent, it seemed, to the light yet drenching rain that was falling about them, and which made Lewis shudder. He did not appear to have suffered much—nothing compared to most of the men around them. He was thin, of course, but he looked in good health, and there was an energy in his face that Lewis had not seen there before.

‘But,’ the young man stammered, ‘I thought that you were dead.’

‘I was afraid,’ said Lord Glarn simply, ‘when I came face to face with it at last. I had always kept it as a last resource, as a man keeps a narcotic beside him in case pain should become unbearable. But when I came to the edge at last, I hesitated ; it might only make a bad matter worse, who knows ? I thought I’d try to see how it felt to escape from all the circumstances of my life before I ended it. You see me here ; I’m as dead to all my past as if the earth were over me.’

‘But at any moment you may be recognised.’

‘No, no,’ Lord Glarn laughed, ‘nothing could be more unlikely. I went and enlisted, and have gone through the whole thing without any fear of that. Who knows me here, or thinks of me ? You have looked me in the face yourself half-a-dozen times and never thought of it.’

‘It confused me now, I remember,’ said Lewis. ‘You said something in Gaelic to one of the others

beside me the other day, and I turned to look at you, and wondered who you were. I asked, but they said your name was Grant.'

'So it is, you know that. I gave 'em the whole string of my Christian names too when I enlisted! I should scarcely have known you but for your eyes,' said the Marquis.

Lewis flushed for a moment as he answered, 'Yes; I am changed.'

'Come, tell me now, Campbell,' said Lord Glarn. 'Here we are, both of us, as far away from the past as if we were in hell or heaven—tell me the truth about that affair.'

But Lewis shook his head. His thin hands were clenched, and he breathed hard. He raised his face quickly. 'Why did you not marry Annie Fraser, my lord?' he asked, looking in Lord Glarn's face in his old frank boyish fashion.

'Do you not know?'

'I? why should I know your reasons?'

'Do you remember a letter that you wrote to her the day before you left Scotland?'

'Yes; I remember.'

'I read it. I need not tell you how—it's a long story—but I scarcely needed to know what that told me. I had seen other things——' he paused.

'Poor little Annie!' said Lewis under his breath.

Lord Glarn looked at him. 'I'm afraid I am not generous like you, Campbell. Well, so she's Marchioness of Glarn after all.'

'For a time,' said Lewis.

Lord Glarn smiled. 'Oh! it's all right; I won't return from the dead. Some day I'll manage it. See there!' He picked up a spent shot that had rung against the bank behind him. 'They all pass me by. There's that young fellow who was killed by my elbow yesterday crying for his sweetheart at home; and I've come out to seek for it, and can't get it at any price.'

'Perhaps,' said Lewis, 'you'll be glad enough some day. This sort of thing amuses you because it's new. When you've wanted shoes, and food, and sleep as long as some of us, you'll be glad enough to return to what you left.'

'Perhaps, perhaps,' said the Marquis softly, looking up at the grey hopeless sky.

They had some sharp fighting the next morning, and Lewis was sitting by the camp-fire along with half-a-dozen other men, when there was a pause for a little in the firing, trying to dry his soaked clothing. Stiff, worn out, some of them wounded, with hungry eyes and frost-bitten hands, they crouched over the ashes of the fire as if it were something sacred.

Some one tapped Lewis on the shoulder and told him he was wanted in the hospital tent.

Without even asking why, he rose wearily, and stumbled after his guide.

The tent was dark, damp, and crowded. The man who guided Lewis paused about the middle, pointing to the wounded man lying between two who were already dead. 'There, that's him,' he said, and went away. Lewis knelt down and put his arm under the Marquis's head. The pale face brightened suddenly with the rare, sweet smile that had charmed him since his boyhood.

'All over,' he murmured. He could scarcely speak, and looked wofully at the blood that had run down over Campbell's sleeve.

Lewis sat with him for a long time till the surgeon came round, glanced at the wounded man, and then hurried on without a word. At last Lord Glarn tried to raise himself, and his fingers closed sharply over the young man's hand.

'*Now,*' he gasped.

Lewis bent over him. 'Oh! sir, stay!' he called in his ear, as if his own impatience must be answered. 'It's not the end yet—stay! stay!'

Glarn opened his eyes again and looked at him—at his eager face—then, like one that has almost been overpersuaded, yet may not change his mind, he smiled, and faintly shook his head.

That night when the dead had been laid in their shallow grave, Lewis stood for a long time in the



darkness beside it, until a passing sentry told him to move on. 'They'll sleep well to-night,' said the man, throwing the flash of his lantern for a minute on the shapeless mound.

'Yes, at last,' said Lewis as he turned away. He remembered the night when the Marquis had quoted to him, with a laugh, a saying of some one that he knew, and Lewis repeated it again to himself as he left the common grave, '*To wake on the beach at Glarn.*'

## CHAPTER XXXVII

THE stir that had attended the close of the war was almost forgotten : for the guns of peace had been fired, and the heroes decorated, and the obscurer men of the British forces thanked collectively. Some had gone to new quarters to boast of their sufferings, and some home to tell their friends, the poor remainder to the hospitals, to die or recover, as the case might be. The streets were gay with sunshine, and even the front of the War Hospital was brightened up with some green grass and autumn flowers.

It was the hour when visitors were admitted, but few came. One carriage only drove up to the big doors, and from it there emerged a man, accompanied by a young, slender woman, who wore a bonnet lined with blue.

‘ I shall come in with you, sister ; I feel so for those poor men. Some of them like to see me, I know.’

‘ You are very kind ; it is a Christian act,’ said the sister, lifting her breviary and a large basket of flowers from the seat of the carriage, and they

entered the corridor together. 'I shall take some of these,' said the young woman; she buried her hands in the basket, and took up a bunch of flowers. At the door of the ward a nurse received them, who spoke to the nun and bowed to the lady, who proceeded to walk slowly down the long room, pausing every now and then to smile and speak a few words to the men as she handed them some flowers. She moved with much elegance, her rich dress gave out a pleasant crumpling of silks, and some of the sick men looked gratefully at her attractive face, framed in the pale blue lining of her bonnet.

'That is the Marchioness of Glarn; she comes here sometimes along with the Sisters of Charity,' said a lame man at the end of the room to his companion, who was lying flat on his back, and could not as yet see the approaching figure.

'What! Who did you say?' The man in bed turned his eyes on the speaker with sudden animation.

'The Marchioness of Glarn; she's a Catholic, and very pious; gives us flowers too.'

He saluted as the lady came up to them, and hobbled a few steps forward to take the flowers that she held out to him. Meantime the man in the next bed moved slightly (he was very ill), and turned, so that his eyes, deep set, and burning with fever, were for a moment fixed upon her

face. Even the little effort had cost him too much though, for a moan of pain escaped him that attracted Annie's attention. 'This poor fellow is very ill?' she said, and with a nod and smile to the other, passed on to where the sick man lay. She had scarcely looked at him before she came close up to the bed, saying in her caressing voice, 'These are very sweet. May I lay them on your pillow?' But even as she spoke, her face grew pale, and she swayed for a moment as if she would fall—she saw that it was Lewis Campbell who lay there. In another instant, however, she had recovered her self-possession and stood upright once more.

Lewis made an effort to speak, but his dry mouth refused to utter the words, so for a minute they were both silent. Annie's rich cloak was sweeping the edge of the bed as she stood looking down at him. . . . There, on the coarse pillow, was the head that had lain upon her breast; wasted and hollow the face that her lips had kissed; slow tears of mortal weakness welled one by one from the brave eyes that had so often looked into her own. . . . She stood still and silent for the space of three breathing times; her brilliant eyes contracted; her little face under the blue bonnet turned as white as milk; then, with a supreme effort of self-control, she detached two or three blossoms from the bunch of flowers in her hand,

laid them delicately on the pillow, and walked away.

She went quickly up the ward, pressing her handkerchief to her lips.

‘I am rather sick,’ she said to the sister, who was standing with the nurse at the door. ‘I cannot stand the sight of so much suffering. Oh! how can things so horrible exist? The smell in this place makes me faint. Come away.’

‘Poor lady! she is so tender-hearted,’ murmured the sister to the nurse as they followed her. At the door of the hospital Annie turned—

‘Was that man—the one in the last bed—very ill?’ she asked.

‘Yes, he is very bad,’ the nurse replied.

‘Will he die?’

‘I cannot say, my lady; he has still a chance.’

‘Oh! it was so horrible! Come, come,’ said Annie to the sister, throwing herself back in the carriage with a sigh.

As they drew near the convent where the nun had to get out, she drew her purse from her pocket.

‘I wish to give you some money, sister, if you will ask the Reverend Mother to have some masses said in your chapel for a soul in Purgatory.’

‘Did it die repentant?’ inquired the sister, as Annie counted the gold into her hand.

Annie looked up quickly. ‘I think so; but in error.’

When the nun had alighted, and the carriage drove on again, she shut her purse with a snap.

‘If there *is* anything in it,’ she said to herself. ‘There may be ; there may be.’ She sat staring out of the window at the crowded streets through which she drove. Her eyes were wide and fixed, and she saw nothing that she passed by. Again she seemed to feel the cold wash of salt water on her feet in the darkness of a cave, to be choked by the anguish of terror that assailed her, to hear Lewis speak to her, telling her not to be afraid : the noise of the streets was like the roar of the distant sea. Then the carriage turned in to the great quiet square where she lived, and drew up at the door. Annie stood on the steps absently, looking before her, without making a step to enter the house, till she saw the astonished faces of the servants, then she recollected herself, went quickly through the hall, and shut herself into her own room. She tore off her cloak and gloves and threw herself into a chair, tossing her purse upon the floor. ‘They don’t say masses for a soul in hell,’ she said, covering her face with her hands.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the hospital, after Annie had left, Lewis lay still, with his eyes fixed upon the roof. A nurse came up and spoke to him, but he made no reply. It was the hour of a meal, and all the men who were able sat up and drank from the little tin

cans, and ate and joked, or complained to one another.

But Lewis was aware no longer of the sounds about him, remembered nothing of the bare room in which he lay ; a wave of memory had blotted out the present from his mind—a rush of pity, of regret. Again he saw the white shore of the loch and heard the stockdoves grieving in the deep woods of Glarn.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII

THERE had been a long frost in Ubster, a long, hard winter, and as yet there was no appearance of the reluctant spring.

It seemed to Dinah as if the winter would never end. She was out one day, which had been rather brighter than usual, and noticed as she came homewards, late in the afternoon, how the frost had once more tightened over the ground, while in the dense sky there was no promise of relief. The words of the psalm she had heard in church the day before came into her mind as she walked on and heard the hard ground ringing to her feet, and looked across the deathlike landscape to the grey sea beyond, '*Being bound in affliction and iron.*' She murmured them to herself as she went along.

Before going home she stopped at the little house at the corner to see Jane Anne. They talked for a few minutes, but Dinah thought her cousin looking strangely agitated. She wondered if she had heard again from Lewis, but she could not bring herself to ask, and Jane Anne, for once, was reticent, if she had any news. Her cheeks



were flushed and her eyes unusually bright. She answered Dinah's remarks quite at random, only when the girl was going away she held her as if she could not let her go.

'You can't come back again this evening, dear?' she asked wistfully.

'No, Janie, it's impossible; we have a dinner-party to-night, you know. I'm afraid I can't. Why? Do you want me for anything?' said Dinah, surprised by the eagerness of her tone.

'No, no, it's not that; it's nothing,' said her cousin hurriedly, and the girl went away, wondering a little what she had meant.

Passing downstairs, Dinah encountered Phemie. She stood in conversation with a young woman in the lobby, who was weeping and pouring out a torrent of Gaelic ejaculations.

'What is the matter with your friend, Phemie?' Dinah inquired kindly.

The young woman could speak no English, so Phemie explained to Dinah that she was her sister-in-law, who was on the eve of her departure to America to rejoin her husband.

'And it's the thought of the ocean that's terrifying her; the creature!' said Phemie. 'She had no thought of going so soon, but the vessel is sailing earlier than we thought.'

Dinah asked when the ship sailed, and was told that night.

‘But you will have friends on board,’ she said, trying to console the girl.

At this, Phemie, who was usually so grim, answered with emotion, ‘There’s many going, Miss—a hundred and more—that’ll never see home and friends again.’

She gazed at Miss Jerningham strangely as she spoke, adding, ‘There’s more than her that’ll weep to-morrow.’

Dinah turned to the young woman, ‘Tell her to have courage, Phemie. She is happy to be going to her husband though she had to sail to the world’s end.’

‘Eh, yon’s the brave leddy,’ sighed Phemie, watching her as she walked away.

Dinah went home and dressed in preparation for the dinner-party.

It was a wild evening, very dark, and the wind had risen, bringing with it driving showers of sleet and snow. It was so cold, that even in the warm old house Mrs. Jerningham and Dinah sat close by the fire.

It grew close on the hour when the guests would arrive, and Mrs. Jerningham was discussing some final details of the dinner-party with her daughter. Dinah was in the act of writing down a list of names; suddenly she paused, lifting her head to listen.

‘What is it? It’s too early for any one to come yet,’ said her mother.

Dinah went on writing, but in a minute she raised her head again.

‘Hush, mother, please! What’s that?’ she said.

Mrs. Jerningham listened.

‘A beggar singing in the street, Dinah; it’s nothing.’

Dinah’s face had grown pale, so pale that her eyes seemed to glow and darken. She got up and went to the window.

The wind had ceased for a moment, and in the pause she heard a man singing outside. The voice was soft and true in the lower, but broken on the upper notes. He played on a little pipe such as any strolling vagabond uses, and sang—

*‘Rose of the World! Star of the Sea!*

*Mother of sinners, pray for me!’*

Dinah, drawing aside the curtains to look out, could vaguely distinguish his figure in the light cast by the lamps at the door. His face she could not see.

‘Don’t have him standing there when the carriages come!’ called her mother. ‘Throw him a penny, Dinah. No, stay; here’s a half-penny, that will do.’

Dinah still looked out eagerly into the darkness, but the man had gone. She, on her part, was for the moment, as she stood at the window, clearly

visible to any one from without. She did not answer her mother, but stepped to the door.

‘William,’ she called to the servant, ‘go down at once and tell the man who was singing in the front courtyard that I wish to speak to him.’

She followed the man downstairs as she spoke, and was standing by the door when he returned to say that there was no one there—the beggar had gone. Miss Jerningham herself stepped outside for a moment. Standing bareheaded in the court, holding up her skirts from the wet stones, she looked round and round again, but there was no sign of the singer.

‘Go along the street a little way and tell me if he is there,’ she commanded the astonished servant.

When he came back again, saying that there was no one to be seen, she stood for a little longer, holding her hand across her eyes, gazing into the darkness, regardless of the icy wind and the drifting snow that touched her bare neck.

She came back shivering to the drawing-room where Mrs. Jerningham was waiting. The first carriage arrived just as she entered the room, and she had to turn her attention to her guests.

It was an unusually formal dinner-party, given in honour of the marriage of Mr. Jerningham’s partner, and every one of any importance in Ubster had been invited.

Jerningham was in remarkably good humour,

and more than ordinarily genial. The guests remarked that at first Miss Jerningham was very pale ; but after they had gone down to dinner, when her cheeks flushed, she looked in her massive style animated and handsome.

She stood a little apart after the ladies had returned to the drawing-room ; every now and then she raised her head as if half expecting to hear something outside. In a few minutes the servant who had brought in the coffee came up to her and told her in a low voice that an old woman was waiting downstairs, who refused to go away until she had seen Miss Jerningham.

‘ Who is she, William ? ’ Dinah asked.

‘ I think she is Mrs. Campbell’s servant, ’ he answered doubtfully, for Phemie had never before been seen at the house.

Dinah told him to put the woman into the library. She waited for a few minutes longer in the drawing-room, then she seized an opportunity when every one was talking to slip away unobserved. As she went downstairs, through the great hall that smelt of dinner, she could hear bursts of laughter and men’s voices from the door of the dining-room.

In the library Phemie was waiting, grim, and redder in the face than usual, pinned into a shawl. She motioned to Dinah to close the door, and began at once in a hoarse whisper—

‘ I could not keep it to myself, dearie ’ (it was thus in her agitation that she dared to address Miss Jerningham). ‘ He charged me that I was never to say a word to you. The sight of you at the window was all he was wantin’, just to heal his eyes, he said, before he went away for ever. He charged me not to tell ! May I be forgiven, but I could not do it ! I thought maybe you would send a word to him by me——’

Dinah seized the old woman’s arm in her strong hand and looked down into her face.

‘ It was he, then ! I knew ! I knew ! Tell me, woman ; be quick ! be quick ! where is he now ? ’

‘ He ’ll soon be gone, dearie ! ’ Phemie broke off suddenly into a different strain, ‘ Eh ! my bonnie lad that used to be ! To see him now ! to see him now ! ’

Dinah tightened her grip on the rough, fat arm.

‘ Go on,’ she said, with a curious likeness to her father in the decisive tones of her voice that seemed to nail the old woman’s words to the point.

‘ Tell me, quick, when did he come ? Where is he now ? ’

‘ He came to see the mistress this morning.’

‘ Yes, yes ; and where is he now ? ’

Phemie uttered a low Gaelic exclamation.

‘ He ’s on the ship by this time, dearie ; it ’s sailing to-night with the tide ; in two hours he ’ll

be gone, and we 'll never see him more. But send me a word, and I 'll take it to him yet,' she pleaded.

Dinah clenched her hand and straightened herself.

'With the emigrant ship that 's in the harbour there?' she demanded, her dry eyes fixed pitilessly on the old woman's tears.

'Yes, yes! May a curse be on them that 's sending him away like an outcast,' she began.

Dinah did not heed her curses. She stood leaning one hand on the table, looking on the ground, her brows knitted deeply, her mouth set.

'Phemie, listen to me,' she said at length. 'Stop crying; stop that nonsense. Do you hear?'

Phemie dried her eyes and was silent. She was half afraid of Dinah whom she had come to seek, for her words had roused a force that she felt would carry her away. Was she going to send a message? Would she go herself to the ship and bid him good-bye, she wondered, with a sudden exaltation in the girl's courage.

But Dinah gave no message.

'Your sister-in-law is going by that boat?' she asked.

'Yes.'

'She has taken her passage?'

'Oh yes; yesterday.'

'Well, are you listening? Go back; go this

moment ; find out if she has gone down to the ship yet ; if she has not, get that ticket from her ; bring it here to me. Don't lose an instant, run ; if she has gone, go down to the ship and bring her back ; quick.'

'What for, dearie ?'

'Oh, you fool !' said Dinah.

She leant forwards and took Phemie by the shoulders.

'Cannot you understand ? I'll pay her passage by the other boat. *I am going myself in her place.* Go ! go !'

With a stifled exclamation and a single glance at Dinah's face, Phemie turned and left the room.



## CHAPTER XXXIX

MRS. JERNINGHAM had just remarked her daughter's absence when Dinah returned to the drawing-room. She walked in with heightened colour, her head held high. She stood by the fireplace talking to the guests ; every now and then, in pauses of her conversation, she glanced at the clock upon the mantelpiece.

When the door opened, she looked round quickly, but it was only the men who came up from the dining-room. Jerningham followed last of all, his dark face glowing with wine and satisfaction.

'What a wild night !' said some one by Dinah's side ; 'we're well off indoors to-night !'

'We are,' Dinah assented, with another glance at the clock, where the fat gilt cupids (that she had known ever since she was a child, and could not reach as high as the mantel-shelf) were presiding over the flight of moments that were now, to her, so dark and so intense.

'Emigrant vessel sails to-night,' said Mr. Jerningham. 'A hundred and more going off—trash from the West. Highlanders. There's no stam-

ina in those people ; they 're a good riddance to the country.'

The clock struck half-past ten. The guests began to take their leave. Miss Jerningham stood immovable till she had shaken hands with the last of them—they seemed multiplied by ten she thought—as if there was no end of them.

'There, that's over for the winter anyway,' said Mrs. Jerningham when the last man had bowed himself away. 'It costs a good deal, but we won't need to do it again.'

Jerningham came up from seeing his guests depart.

Dinah observed the man-servant follow him upstairs. She went to the door. 'Has any one come to see me?' she asked.

'Mrs. Campbell,' the servant replied, speaking in a low voice, lest Jerningham should overhear ; for the household could not but be aware of the relations between him and Jane Anne, as she had never before entered the house since her marriage.

'Hush !' said Dinah ; she added calmly, 'Put her into my room.' She waited for a minute until she heard him close the door, then she returned to the drawing-room.

Jerningham said he had still some letters to write, and went off to the library. Mrs. Jerningham began to yawn. Dinah went up and bid her good-night, then she went to her own room.

The light was turned low, and Jane Anne was standing rolled up in a great shawl, her face pale, her hands trembling with excitement, as she held out a paper to Dinah. 'Here it is,' she gasped. 'Phemie told me. She told me everything. I said that I would come myself. Oh! Dinah, what are you going to do?'

'I am going away; help me, Janie,' said Dinah, who had scarcely taken the paper from her cousin's hand, before she had rolled it up and put it into her purse. Jane Anne stood spellbound; she hardly realised what the girl's swift movements meant. Dinah had begun to unfasten her dress, when she stopped and looked at her watch. 'I've no time,' she said, and began instead to roll up some clothing into a bundle. 'There! tie it up, Janie,' she said. She stripped the bracelets from her arms, and slipped the rings off her fingers, not hurrying, but moving with extraordinary deftness and precision. Jane Anne caught the elation in the girl's face. She wrapped up the bundle with trembling hands. Dinah came up to her holding a cloak. 'Put on this and give me that,' she said, and Jane Anne took off the shawl that she was wearing—of the dark green Campbell tartan—and watched amazed as Dinah wrapped herself in it, covering her head with it as the peasant women do.

'Are you going—like that—Dinah?' stammered

Jane Anne. Her words seemed to choke her, but her eyes were bright, and she put on the cloak as quickly as Dinah could have done. Dinah caught up the bundle and then she threw her arms about her cousin's neck; they clung together for a moment, just as they had done years ago, when Jane Anne, not Dinah, was about to leave that house; then the girl opened the door, and they stepped out into the passage. Seeing that there was no one on the staircase, and that the lighted hall was empty, Dinah locked the door of the bedroom behind her and took the key.

‘They will think I have gone to bed,’ she whispered. ‘Come, Janie, courage; there is no one there.’

But, for once in her life, there was no need to exhort Jane Anne to have courage. Her whole soul rose in a sudden triumph as she followed the girl silently downstairs. She paused for an instant, trembling with excitement by the library door. Just there she had stood years before, but trembling then with terror at the idea of telling her uncle about her marriage; and now Jane Anne smiled, in the only revengeful moment of her whole meek life, as she passed on and followed Dinah out into the darkness.

The street lamps were all extinguished, only the light from the windows cast a red glow upon the

stones as the two women crossed the courtyard and were swallowed up by the night.

A few steps farther ; then Dinah put her arms about her cousin again. ' Good-bye now,' she said. ' Go home, Janie ; don't be frightened, you have not far to go. God bless you and Phemie for this,' and in another moment she had turned towards the harbour and was gone. Jane Anne with a sob looked after her, and turned to take her own way home.

It was very dark now, with some wind and driving showers of snow. Dinah bent her head as she hurried forwards. The water soaked through her slippers, the wind blew aside the shawl that covered her, and the cold sleet was blown for a minute on her bare neck, but she wrapped the shawl more closely round her and struggled on. She passed no one as she went along the quay.

The lights of the harbour flared dimly in the murky atmosphere. There was a dense crowd upon the pier ; a crowd of sobbing women, and men pushing and struggling, everywhere the sound of voices broken with weeping. A sorry crowd it was, with lean, hunger-sunken faces and stooping figures, and sodden, rain-soaked clothing. Most of the emigrants had gone on board early in the day, but there remained many who had still to get on to the ship, and had to be disentangled

at the last moment from the squad of friends and relatives who had come to see them off.

Dinah pushed her way amongst the people ; her tall stature and her gentle manner made them move aside to let her pass ; and at last she reached the gangway, where an official with a lantern was examining the passes and taking the passengers on board.

‘ Come along, come along, now,’ he called in a raucous voice. ‘ Come along with you, or we ’ll never be off to-night,’ the crowd pressed more closely around her. Dinah drew her shawl over her face as she stepped upon the gangway, and held him out the paper without a word.

‘ What name ?’ he bawled.

‘ Campbell.’

‘ Pass on—be quick,’ lowering the lantern towards the next comer, and she stepped down on to the deck.

For a long while after the gangway had been raised she could distinguish nothing amidst the crowd. They huddled round her like frightened sheep, women sobbing, and uncared-for, wearied little children wailing at their sides, men sitting hiding their faces with their hands. At another time all Dinah’s sympathies would have been aroused. But she gave no heed to them now. She counted the slow minutes ; would the signal never be given for the vessel to leave ? What if

they had already discovered her absence—if somehow or other they had found out where she had gone! She stood holding by the railing, unnoticed amongst the crowd. At last, with a final shouting and a great lurch, the ship began to move.

The rain was clearing gradually; the blind night wind buffeted her face, and spatterings of spray fell upon her shoulders, as the vessel rocked with the rising tide.

Then the moon came out faintly; and when the sails at last had filled, and the freshening breeze was carrying them out to sea, the crowd about her began gradually to disperse. Some had gone below, and some had sunk down on deck, lying on their bundles, slackened into strange attitudes of weariness and depression.

Still Dinah kept looking, and then she moved suddenly forwards. At last she saw Lewis, sitting motionless by the railing to the left of her. She stood at first with her eyes fixed upon him, scarcely able to believe that it was he. Had time then, however long in passing it had been to her, made such cruel havoc of him! It seared her very heart as she looked. She saw his sunken eyes, his hair touched with grey, his thin hands. In the wavering light, where he sat under the lamp, she could have thought it was an old man. He kept his head turned towards the town, watch-

ing till the light on the pier-head died away in the distance like a spark. Then, with a deep groan and a shiver, he raised his worn body, and leaning both hands on the railing, he cast a long look round about him.

The moon was sinking now, and in the heavens swept clear of cloud, there would soon arise the first grey trembling of the dawn.

The Scottish shore was left behind them as, with a steady freshening wind, the ship plunged out to sea.

The effort had been too much for Lewis ; as he looked, he let go his hold, and sank back again upon the seat, inert and blinded with weakness.

Dinah moved a step forwards. He did not see. She sat down by his side, but he did not look up. At last she laid her hand upon his arm.

*' Are you sad, Lewis, leaving all that you love behind you ? '* she said, dropping the shawl from her head, and she looked up into his face with eyes that were as grey and as full of hope as the grey sea, over the brightening waves of which the morning was about to break.

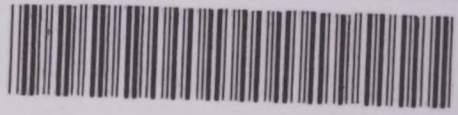








**LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**



00022121844

